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The Intergenerational Initiative is a P-16 coalition of individuals and organizations committed to:

- Publicizing the good news about intergenerational activities
- Serving as proponents for collaborative efforts between generations
- Fostering alliances that enhance education at all levels
- Involving young and old in solving public problems through service learning

The Initiative is a Higher Education Cooperation Act partnership funded by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The following education and aging organizations are partners:

- American Association of Retired Persons
- Chicago State University
- Council of Illinois Community College Presidents
- Eastern Illinois University
- Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities
- Governors State University
- Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents
- Illinois Association of School Boards
- Illinois Association of Senior Citizens
- Illinois Coalition on Aging
- Illinois Community College Board
- Illinois Community College Trustee Association
- Illinois Community College Council of Presidents
- Illinois Corporation for National & Community Service
- Illinois Department on Aging
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- Illinois Department of Corrections
- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Illinois Education Association
- Illinois Learning Partnership
- Illinois Principals Association
- Illinois PTA
- Illinois Retired Teachers Association
- Illinois Association of Rural and Small Schools
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois State Library
- Illinois State University
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Northern Illinois University
- Service Corps of Retired Executives
- Southern Illinois University Systems
- University of Illinois System
- Western Illinois University

Continuance is a quarterly publication providing information about intergenerational activities and programs thus promoting a continuance of history, knowledge, understanding, and humor between generations. The newsletter is a collaborative effort of the thirty-three partners listed above.

Editor:

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Preschool Gives Children a Foundation

A View of Preschool from Business

Elzie Higginbottom

Preschool is where children learn how to learn and begin to assume responsibility. What we do for children in their early years directly affects their future in education and in their careers. We in business and education have the power to give children a strong foundation for knowledge and for learning.

Back in the 1970s Head Start was created to give children a stronger foundation for kindergarten and first grade. Today with dual working households, there is an even greater need to make sure that we have good places for children when parents can't be home. There are too many negative environments and it reaches down to people who have little resistance.

Prisons and Preschool

We have incarcerated a million people. What is wrong with this picture? We need to target more money up front, investing in preschool and developing good citizens so that fewer young people turn to crime—the only solution they see.

At East Lake Management Company, we hire young people who have had trouble with the law. They have paid their debt to society and need to establish a new life. The most common characteristic of these employees is that they did not

have a good preschool foundation. They were either neglected in preschool or did not have a preschool opportunity.

Human development and building construction are similar. If you have a good footing and if the steel is sound, the building will be strong and true. If you lack that strong foundation, the walls will crack, the roof will leak, and you will experience problems. If children are glued to the television in day care rather than learning in a quality preschool, they lose and that loss stays with them for life. If you do the right things for preschoolers, you don't need metal detectors and more prisons.

Connection between Preschool and Business

The association between preschool and the world of business must be encouraged. As preschoolers, children can have field trips to the zoo, the museum, and the park. They should also take field trips to local businesses and see a relationship between business and education.

Higher education has potential to take the lead in developing quality preschools by training good professionals and by emphasizing that the learning process begins with preschool. All levels of education, but especially higher education, need to reach out to the business

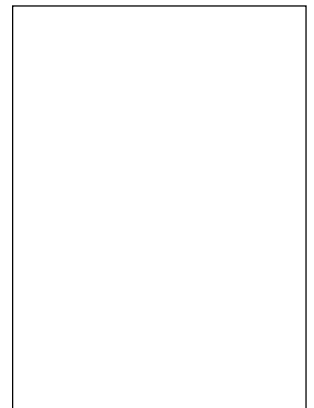
community and ask, How can we help you? How can you help us? The education community must go out like religious evangelists to involve the business community.

What Can Business Do?

Business can assist by donating computers, providing meals, helping with management, and so forth. Some business people have an understanding of the importance of preschool, but most do not, and there is no heavy focus on it in the private sector.

If we were to get more kids into preschool and if we had a greater number of quality preschools, what would happen? Fewer dropouts. Less need for remediation. It is society's problem and the time to deal with it is now!

*Elzie Higginbottom,
CEO East Lake Management
and Development Company*



The Quilt Is a Symbol of COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT Throughout Our History

The traditions of quilt making bring us to the beginnings of our country and our democracy where the purpose of education was to create good citizens. Like a quilt, P-16 (preschool through college) service learning takes the squares and triangles of community service and academic learning and joins them together into a single entity. P-16 service learning is a complex way of saying that all levels of education, pre-

school, elementary, high school, and college should be a seamless network that joins everyone in the goal of quality education. Students must be engaged in this goal as well as educators and the community. P-16 service learning is built around the curriculum, like the group below, putting the final stitches in the school quilt. P-16 service learning results in a united educational system returned to the basic values of civility and citizenship.



Eleven Steps Can Lead to Increase in Civility

Senator Paul Simon

I sometimes hear and frequently read about “the declining civility” in our public life, and it is true that we have grown excessively partisan and sometimes simply rude in our public discourse. Democrats and Republicans work together less than they did two decades ago, and that is not good for the nation and not good for either political party. To blame Congress alone is a mistake. All of us play a role in making ours a more or less civil society. On the right are 11 disconnected points, a personal program you can follow that will help.

These simple 11 points are things each of us can do to make ours a more civil society. And if you have further suggestions, send them to me at the Public Policy Institute, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL., 62901-4429. *From the Chicago Sun Times, April 20, 2000, www.suntimes.com*

Paul Simon is the former Senator from Illinois and is Director of the SIUC Public Policy Institute



- In a debate or dispute, whether in the U.S. Senate or in your office or your family, assume that the other person is as sincere as you are. Almost always that is a valid assumption, and it takes the harshness away from a dispute.
- Volunteer to help a civic association.
- When waitresses or waiters bring you food in a restaurant, or salespeople help you buy something, thank them.
- Be as courteous to your family as you would be to others, and as courteous to others as you would be to your family.
- Be a courteous driver, letting people into your lane, pausing to let pedestrians across the street and doing the small things that will cost you less than two minutes a day—and reduce your chance of getting ulcers.
- At least once a week, send a note of congratulations or thanks or sympathy to someone.
- Don't tell jokes that show disrespect to another race, religion, ethnic group or association of people of any kind.
- Use restraint in language. This is related to the previous point, but broader. If you use restraint in language, others probably will do the same. Sometimes incivility of language comes from people who do not intend to stir up animosity, but intemperate language often causes intemperate responses.
- Pick up a scrap of paper or an empty can that is littering the area where you are walking. It's good exercise for you, a good example for others and somehow doing it or observing it makes everyone feel better.
- Don't watch too much television. A Harvard study came to the conclusion that the reason we attend church less and belong in fewer numbers to groups, from the Rotary Club to a bowling league, is that we watch too much television.
- At least once every six months, invite someone from a “different” group for dinner at your home (preferably) or to a restaurant.

What is Citizenship?

The first in a series that examines the views of our political leaders

Senator Emil Jones

Citizenship is about respecting others and taking pride in ourselves and in our communities. My eighth-grade teacher taught us about respect. I recall vividly that when another teacher would come into the classroom, we would stand, and show respect for our guest and in doing that take pride in ourselves.

My eighth-grade teacher had a profound impact on me. She taught us that we could be whatever we desired and that we could overcome any obstacle. She also encouraged us to find our history and where we came from. She taught us about citizenship through a class called civics, which was about government and our duty as a citizen. The more one learns and knows about government and how it functions, the better one understands how to be a supporter and informed participant in government.

There are peaks and valleys in life and each of us must have the courage to span the gap from peak to peak. Just because you are unsuccessful doesn't mean you are in a valley. Those who are successful have failures as well as successes, but unfortunately we don't talk about our failures and how we had the fortitude to overcome them. We prefer talking about our successes.

Citizenship is about respecting others regardless of their culture or occupation. For example, my oldest son had a job picking up paper at

Soldier Field. He came home one day and said that they had a strike so he had to go out into Grant Park. He said that he didn't want to go to Grant Park, "My friends might see me."

I explained to my son that he was earning a decent salary for the summer. And one day when he became an adult, he would be less likely to litter; but even more important he would have respect for the person picking up the litter. We must place dignity in all jobs and all people whether they dig ditches, drive buses, fill medical prescriptions, or pick up litter. We should not have a society that looks down on any occupation or culture. It is our duty as good citizens to respect all and in doing so, we too find benefits.

When I went to Springfield in 1973, I made a practice of sitting next to someone from downstate I didn't know. As a result I got to know the downstate legislators quite well. Later, I was able to get them to support issues that I wanted and I helped them on their issues too.

Community Involvement

Citizenship involves looking beyond ourselves and involves making the quality of life better for others. In doing such we in turn we help ourselves. For example, even though you may not have children in school--

it is your duty to help schools.

Young people must learn to respect each other, as well as adults and the elderly. When young people go to senior citizen centers and nursing homes, they rarely think that one day they will be old. When our students volunteer with senior citizens they are exposed to older people and come to realize their talents and wisdom, and that they share many similarities with young people today. When our country was younger and less affluent, older people lived with families; citizenship was more strongly held; and ties and respect were there. Through economic growth, citizenship has been weakened. We need more people like my eighth-grade teacher to help individuals of all ages develop respect for ourselves and for our communities. That is citizenship at its best.

*Senator Emil Jones
is Minority Leader of the Senate
and represents Chicago's 14th District*



Gallery

of P-16+ Service-Learning Ideas

P-16 service-learning is built around the curriculum, like this work sheet that helps a 6-year-old use math skills to calculate squares for her quilt and learn about graphs.

Quilting Builds a Sense of History and Brings the Community into the School

P-16 Partners: Sidney Elementary School, champaign County Early American History Museum, Home Extension Clubs

Contact: Kathy Kingston, Sidney Elementary School, 217-688-2821

Funding: Learn and Serve, Illinois State Board of Education

Quilting was the theme for a service-learning project that brought the designing and making of quilts to each K-3 class. The Illinois Quilt Research Project was a year-long community project that documented local history and culture.

First, a master quilter came to school. She met with each class to explain the history of quilts, let the students feel and hold a quilt, and ask questions. She showed the students how the material is cut into different geometrical shapes and sewn together to become the quilt top. The students also learned how the batting is put between the quilt cover and the back, and how the quilter uses small stitches to outline the design

or ties throughout the quilt to hold everything in place.

The students discovered that quilting has applications to math, science, writing, and reading. For example, younger students identified the differences in the quilts, made graphs about the number of quilt squares in various pictures, and made comparisons about quilt sizes. Older students added the size of the squares to determine the final size.

Children wrote stories about making quilts, conducted oral histories about quilts in their families and communities, and related local cultural quilts in the community. Each class designed a different quilt for their classroom.

1



2



3



4



5



Photo 1: The master quilter explains the history and purpose of quilts and then the students feel the texture. Photo 2: Students cut and design their squares. Photo 3: Stitch by stitch this third-grader outlines his square. Photo 4: Students and senior citizens put the quilt on the frame and make the finishing stitches. Photo 5: "This is my square."

2. Conflict Resolution through Drama

P-16+ Partners: Black Hawk College, Moline, Moline High School, and United Township High School, East Moline

Contact Dan Haughey, Director of Theatre, Black Hawk College, 309-796-1311

Funding: Illinois Campus Compact and the Corporation for National Service.

After a suicide on campus, Theatre students at Black Hawk College discussed violence and how they could use a dramatic production to learn about conflict through improvisation. The play, *Hedda Gabler*, is about violence, conflict, and suicide and themes of men versus women, empathy, friendship, pride, power, and social values. The discussion of these themes provided a rich environment for improvisation of contemporary conflict and discussion of its resolution.

The Theatre Outreach Program to Schools (TOPS) gave college and high school students an opportunity to work together to develop a new understanding of conflict. Through participation in the project, students learned to see theatre as a new medium for discussing social issues, increase their problem-solving skills, and become practitioners of conflict-resolution. The workshops were held at Moline high School and United Township High School and were planned by Black Hawk students.



Photo 1: The cast of *Hedda Gabler* poses after a matinee performance for high school students. Photo 2: Black Hawk college students ask United Township high school students to compare the conflict in the play to the conflict in their lives. Photo 3: A group prepares for the department store conflict improvisation. It is Christmas Eve and the store will close in 20 minutes. You lost a precious gift and want to find it so you go to the lost and found line. In your panic, how do you show caring and empathy for others like yourself in the line? Photo 4: United Township students resolve a conflict through caring. They act out a scenario where one student is preparing to take the Advance Placement Exam in 20 minutes and a friend comes who needs to talk to someone immediately.

3. Finding Real World Learning through Archaeology

P-16+ Partners: Unity Point School District, Carbondale, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

Contact: Sylvia Sullivan, 618-529-4151

Funding: Learn and Serve, Illinois State Board of Education

Nothing teaches history like archaeology so when the Unity Point sixth grade had a chance to get involved with excavation, ancient fossils, and preserving artifacts with Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, the teachers were delighted. At the Center for Archaeological Studies, students helped categorize Anasazi artifacts. They weighed, counted, sketched, and classified the items. The artifacts were then repackaged in acid-free bags. The information was later added to a data bank.

Early in the project they participated in a simulated dig. A sixth-grade student describes the process. “The dig is a study of archeology by exploring real artifacts. We each have a job and a goal. For example, there is the artist/sketcher, the bagger/labeler, the crew chief, the digger, curator, and the screener. If something is left out and not in

order, it might ruin the whole dig. So everyone must keep on track so we can go to another level.

In another experience, students sorted through Mastodon dung by length, shape, and type. The students used dissection microscopes to look closely at the digesta and classify the materials. A Paleo-botanist trained them via a live TV broadcast and then university graduate students moved from class to class, answered questions and interpreted data.

Teacher Sylvia Sullivan points to the skills that were developed through this curriculum. “The skills address the Illinois Learning Standards for math, science, language arts, technology, in fact, all categories of standards. Even more important, the students saw value and relevance in their learning.”

Photo 1: SIUC professor Lee Newsome explains an artifact and orients the students to their task. Photo 2: Graduate students and elementary students clean the artifacts. Photo 3: Students sort the Anasazi artifacts from the four corners excavation site in New Mexico. Photo 4: The acid free bags are labeled with a description of the artifact. Photo 5: Identifying Mastodon dung by length, shape, and type—students found fish bones, plant material, and ancient fossils. Photo 6: A university graduate student and 4th grader discuss archaeology



4. The Best Way to Learn about Reading Is To Teach It

P-16+ Partners: Urbana High School, and Leal and Wiley Elementary Schools, Urbana

Contact: Diane Gibbons, Urbana High School, 217-384-3680

Funding: Learn and Serve, Illinois State Board of Education

Students at Urbana High School are getting a depth of reading background. The high school students study reading concepts and then read, mentor, and share reading concepts with kindergarten and first grade students.

Two days each week several youngsters at Wiley and Leal Elementary Schools in Urbana look forward to sessions with the Teen Tutors from Urbana High School. The teens complete a pre-service training to help prepare them for the work they will be doing in a professional situation. Following the training, they visit the elementary school to meet the principal, teachers and young students they will be working with over the next several weeks.

The class is split into two groups, so while one group is out tutoring, the other group is in the regular classroom,

taking advantage of a much smaller class size. Each group gets two days tutoring and two days classroom time. On Fridays, the class comes together to go over more material and to reflect on the challenges and accomplishments of the week. The students keep a journal about what they have learned and describe the progress of their students.

Photo 1: The teen reading tutors and project director Diane Gibbons are getting ready to take the bus to coach their younger mentees.

Photo 2: Teen tutor, Keyona White reviews the reading lesson with teacher Janet LeRoy before beginning the session with her two young students.

Photo 3: Teen tutor Jennifer Butler enjoys some free time with her students after a reading session at Leal Elementary School.

Photo 4: Kali and her mentor, Marquisha Smith, proudly exhibit the Caldecott Award she won for reading 29 books.



5. Psychology Students Meet a Community Need: A Toy Gun Exchange

P-16 Partners: Rockford College, Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois, Winnebago County Sheriff's Department, and Rockford Community Foundation

Belinda Wholeben, Rockford College, 815-226-4018

Psychology students from Rockford College discussed domestic violence in their adult development course. They decided to delve more deeply into the topic through current laws, comparing the US to the rest of the world, and looking at firearm usage. Their research led them to a project on preventing firearm violence. They

prepared a brochure called Parents Gun Safety Education and sponsored a toy gun exchange that emphasized safety and preventing violence in homes and in the community. The students organized the event, involved businesses, and agencies, and reflected on their accomplishments.

Photo 1: Students brought toy guns and other violent toys such as this rifle to exchange. They are greeted by the Rockford College Mascot. Photo 2: Rockford College Students help younger students take the pledge "I promise that if I see a gun, I won't touch it, and I will leave the area. I promise that if I see a gun I will tell an adult. I will remember that all guns are loaded. My safety and the safety of others are important to me. I promise to be safe." Photo 3: Students sign the mural. Photo 4: Everyone who brought a toy gun gets to select a nonviolent toy. Photo 5: "I choose this one."



6. Community History Is Found in A One-Room School House

P-16+ Partners: Rend Lake College and Ewing Elementary School

Contact: Mary Hart, Ewing School, 618-629-2181

Rend Lake College students join the first through fourth grade classes at Ewing-northern Grade School on Saturday morning for learning lessons, reciting poems, and playing old games at the one-room school house. Students experience school in the "olden days," some in the same school as their great-grandparents. Rend Lake College students plan the lessons just like the teachers of old to bring a little history into the educational experience. There is something about the old one-room school house that makes the history so authentic and real.

Students participated in activities, such as penmanship, oral presentations from old basal readers, old games, like Annie Over; singing patriotic songs, sewing, and listening to stories from older adults who had attended the one-room school house.



Photo 1: Rend Lake College students are wait for the elementary students at the one-room school house. Photo 2: Younger students experience some old-fashioned teaching techniques. Photo 3: Students look at an old basal reader while sitting on the prairie

7. Building Houses and Citizens

P-16 Partners: Academy for Learning, Blue Island, Habitat for Humanity, Dolton Early Childhood Center

Contact: Jennifer Avenatti, Academy for Learning 708-597-8862

Funded by Learn and Serve, Illinois State Board of Education

The philosophy of the Academy of Learning is that “young people cannot develop a sense of their own value unless they have the opportunity to be of value to others.” This idea is the basis of the high school’s service-learning program. In alliance with Habitat for Humanity, they have helped turn things around for 200 behavior disordered, emotionally disturbed, and general education students placed in lieu of expulsion.

The Habitat for Humanity projects provide alternative classrooms needed to break away from the patterns of a traditional curriculum that focuses on behavioral control rather than learning. In Habitat the students help plan construction, use math to calculate supplies needed, develop their language and writing skills to reflect on what they have done, and hone communication skills to work with others, especially retirees who are involved with Habitat. The Habitat site is the most important classroom because that is where the students come to

terms with their ability to take responsibility for their own education.

The students are also involved in the community teaching elementary students special skills, such as jewelry making. They visit senior citizens, and teach manners and making friends to the Dolton Early Childhood Center students. Language arts, written and oral communication, mathematics and other “general education” skills are linked to the project.

Photo 1: Raising a wall at a new Habitat house that students helped plan. Photo 2: Rehabilitating a house gives students the chance to practice new skills and find relevance to education. Photo 3: Students also get involved as teachers in elementary schools. This Academy for Learning Student teaches a Phoenix elementary student about Indian jewelry.

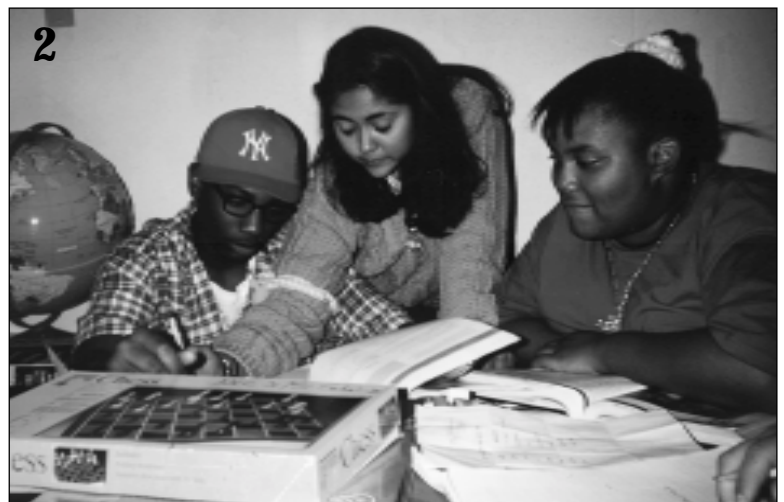
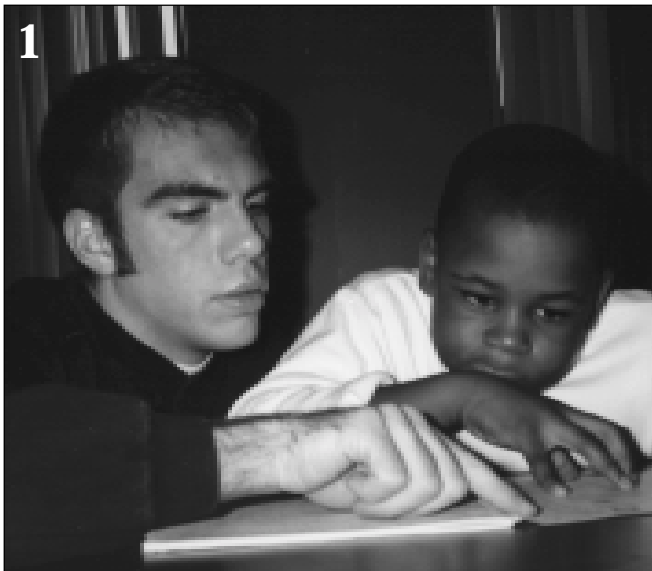


8. Service Learning and Future Teachers

*P-16+ Partners: North Central College, Johnson Elementary School and Collins High School, Chicago
and Oak Park School, Aurora
Contact: Jan Fitzsimmons, 630-637-5100*

Future teachers from North Central College have hands on experiences in their first semester through the Introduction to Education course. A key part of the course is a service-learning field experience that pairs them with elementary and high school students in the Junior/Senior Scholars, a tutoring program for children at risk of school failure. The program involves first to twelfth graders and offers a wide range of activities year round, including tutoring, study groups, weekend retreats, work internships, camps, sports, and family events for more than 200 children. The foundation of the program is college students who are involved with service-learning activities.

Photo 1: Kevin Krausz works with Darius in Johnson Elementary School reading together as a part of the Introduction to Education course. Kevin learns about teaching and learning while Darius enriches his reading comprehension. Photo 2: Eva Silva (center) is helping Senior Scholars from Aurora and Chicago hone their math skills. Photo 3: Danille Pleasant developed a Reading Buddy Program in connection with the Battle of the Books event during summer camp. Reading Buddies read twice a week with first through fifth grade students to complete a list of books. Photo 4: Students learn about the science of flight with Shelia Reet. They tested their understanding of velocity and pressure through hands-on experiments.





Establishing P-16+ Service Learning

The P-16+ Service-Learning Task Force

The development of the P-16+ Service-Learning Task Force coincided with the signing of the P-16 partnership agreement by the three educational boards. Service learning has taken on a broader mission in Illinois, based on the idea that it is a lifelong venture and that it helps move the state toward a seamless system of education.

In some states service learning is separated into K-12 and higher education. In Illinois, the P-16+ service learning initiative considers learners of all ages as resources for each other, for education, and for the community.

What is P-16+ Service Learning?

The goal for P-16+ service learning is to connect preschool elementary, high school, college and the community in joint efforts by:

- engaging students
- meeting real community needs
- connecting the curriculum to the real world
- emphasizing reflection
- promoting structure
- achieving learning goals
- developing civic responsibility

Each of these concepts will be emphasized differently according to the setting of service learning and its purpose. In all settings there is a balance between community service and academic learning. For example, In an academic setting, service learning is strongly tied to course objectives, curriculum, and standards. In a community-based or family-based setting, service learning is tied less to a formal curriculum and more to specific learning goals.

Service-Learning Survey

In the fall of 1999, the task force representing the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Office of the Deputy Governor for Education; the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Illinois Community College Board conducted a survey of service learning at all levels of

education. The Illinois Community College Trustees Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards sent a FAX survey to school districts and community colleges. In addition, the task force completed an e-mail survey of deans of education, faculty, and public college presidents to learn more about service learning in Illinois.

Of the 376 who completed surveys, 123 reported service-learning programs in their schools or on their campuses and 78% were strongly supportive or supportive of service learning. Questions included their support or nonsupport for service learning, their views on its strengths and weaknesses, its potential for Illinois, and their interest in getting involved.

Results of Survey

School Districts (Superintendents, Principals, and Teachers)

277 school districts responded: 70-strongly supportive of service learning; 123-supportive; 40-no opinion; 21-unsupportive; 1-strongly unsupportive; 22-No response; 74 have service-learning programs

Community College Presidents

30 responded: 16-strongly supportive; 9-supportive; 2-no opinion; 0-unsupportive or strongly unsupportive; 3-No response; 20 have service learning in their courses

Universities and College Presidents (Public and Private)

10 responded: 5-strongly supportive; 3-supportive; 2-no opinion; 0-unsupportive

Deans of Colleges of Education

19 responded: 6-strongly supportive of service learning; 11-supportive; 2-no opinion; 0-unsupportive or strongly unsupportive; 15 have service learning in their courses

Higher Education Faculty

16 campuses responded: 9-strongly supportive; 6-supportive; 0-no opinion; 1-unsupportive or strongly unsupportive; 14 have service learning on their campuses

For a copy of the report see:

www.siu.edu/offices/iii/



Members of the P-16 Service-Learning Task Force

(First column, top to bottom)

Jane Angelis, Intergenerational Initiative, SIU

Ghingo Brooks, Malcolm X. College

Nancy Bragg, Illinois State University

Joe Dunn, Illinois Coalition for Community Services

Kathy Engelken and Shawn Sweeney, Illinois Campus Compact

(Second column, top to bottom)

Gary Greene and Bill Garcia, Illinois State Board of Education

Barbara Kurth, Field Middle School, Northbrook

Tim Krieger, Corporation for National Service

Grace Troccoli, Chicago Public Schools (not pictured)

Belinda Wholebin, Rockford College

Jim Zabel, Illinois Resource Center

Others who have contributed to the task force include Kim Armstrong, Black Hawk College; Rex Duncan, Rend Lake College; Brenda Ferguson, Office of the Deputy Governor for Education; Keith Hilkirk, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; and Sally Pancrazio, Illinois State University.

For further information on:

—K-12 Service Learning, contact Learn and Serve, ISBE 312-814-7043, www.isbe.il.state.us/learnserve

—Higher Education Service Learning, contact Campus Compact 309-438-812, kengvp@aol.com

—P-16 Service Learning and Service Learning Task Force, contact Intergenerational Initiative, 618-453-1186, ilii@siu.edu, www.siu.edu/offices/iii

—Joint Education Committee contact Illinois Board of Higher Education, 217-577-3747, www.ibhe.il.state.us, Spreitzer@ibhe.il.state.us

Creating a P-16 Public Policy

Joint Education Committee Update

Marilyn McConachie, Co-Chair, Joint Education Committee.

Creating a collaborative public policy depends on the flexibility of its members and how they can change. Community colleges, universities, and schools have their own boards and their own agendas. The Joint Education Committee can agree on change at the state level but can we make it happen at the local level? The answer is yes, if the changes become part of the system. The JEC is working toward systemic change to achieve (1) College-ready Kids; (2) Classroom-ready Teachers; and (3) Log-on Learning.

COLLEGE-READY KIDS

Preparation of college-ready kids means that students can perform at a high enough level in each subject to begin college without remedial work. The Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) measures the accomplishment of the learning standards and will be given in the spring of the 11th grade. Students will receive three scores from the PSAE: the Prairie State Score, the ACT score, and a work keys score. The *PSAE* score is a total score from all three components of the exam and will count for Prairie State Awards and for college admission. The *ACT*, which covers part of the Illinois Learning Standards, will be embedded in the PSAE, and the ACT score can be used with colleges anywhere in the country. This feature will save money for parents and time for students. The *work keys tests* cover another part of the

learning standards and will yield a score on workplace skills, a score that employers can use to make hiring decisions.

The PSAE is being sponsored jointly by the four governing boards for K-12, community colleges, higher education, and workforce development. If the exam is to be successful, students must know and care about their scores. Local colleges and universities must know what it is, talk about it, use it for admissions, and put it in their catalogs. Admissions officers, students, parents, and high school counselors must know about it. Employers must use it for hiring. At the present time, many businesses don't even ask for a high school transcript. Our goal is to raise the stakes for doing well in school by putting some consequences in place.

The implementation of the Prairie State exam will be addressed by the higher education boards at their next meetings. Then each board can use its authority to make the PSAE part of its institutional practices.

CLASSROOM-READY TEACHERS

The second goal of the JEC partnership is to improve the quality of teacher preparation. If we have standards for students, we must have standards for teachers. This goal will be met with three components: (1) stronger teacher preparation; (2) more rigorous standards for

certification; and (3) high quality ongoing professional development. In addition, a federally mandated report card for colleges of education will help them compare their work to the work of other institutions and encourage them to improve their offerings for teachers.

To help raise the quality of our teachers, new tests are being established. First, all college students entering into teacher-education programs will take a basic skills test to gain admission. The purpose of the test is to determine their grasp of the skills necessary to begin a program in teacher education. Next, at the end of four years, students will be tested on content knowledge and teaching skills for teachers, specifically what teachers should know and do. For example, a prospective math teacher must demonstrate mastery of college-level mathematics, including a documented ability to teach math as well as proficiency in the Illinois Teacher Content Standards. The state tests and portfolios required by the colleges will emphasize knowledge, skills, and performance. The state board is developing a policy for how to make sure teachers are strong enough at the end of their four-year induction period to earn a standard, five-year certificate. Next year, the state board will ask the JEC to support legislation for induction programs that will help more new teachers succeed and

stay in the field. Right now, a high percentage leave teaching within the first five years. Mentoring and support programs have reduced that problem in other states and helps prevent teacher shortages.

Last, ongoing professional development will facilitate renewal of certification every five years. Each teacher will prepare a personal development plan, what they need to know and improve, which will be tied to the Illinois standards and the local school improvement plan. Teachers will be required to complete 120 units of education in five years in order to be recertified.

THE ILLINOIS CENTURY NETWORK

The Illinois Century Network is a joint venture of the four boards to bring high-quality educational opportunities to the entire state. Courses will be available everywhere all the time. The first step is the Illinois Virtual High School. Programming will most likely begin with low-incidence courses (such as language courses in Japanese, Latin, or Russian, and math courses that might not be available in rural areas). As the online curriculum develops, Illinois teenagers at any public, private, and home school will have access to many courses twenty-four hours a day.

A planning team consisting of the deputy governor and the executives of the education boards

is overseeing development of the Illinois Virtual High School, which will utilize the infrastructure of the new Illinois Century Network. At the same time, the higher education boards are implementing the Illinois Virtual Campus, which provides college-level courses. There are currently two virtual high schools in the country, in Florida and Kentucky.

THE FUTURE

The JEC is working well because of the strong leadership from the four boards. It is a credit to the organizers of the partnership and the lay members, two from each board, who are driving the agenda to make sure it does not get mired in interagency politics. The board members of the JEC bring lay leadership and judgment to the task of coordinating high-quality education for all Illinoisans across the P-16 continuum.

Joint Education Committee

Profiles of Two of the JEC Members

*Marilyn McConachie, Co-Chair Joint Education Committee
and Elzie Higginbottom, Representing the Workforce Development Board*

**Marilyn McConachie,
Member, Illinois State Board
of Education and Co-chair
Joint Education Committee**

Background

Marilyn McConachie has been a member of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for three years and has been active in public policy development for 20 years. She was a high school English teacher at Webster Groves High School in suburban St. Louis and prizes those experiences and the good relationships with students. She began policy work in education in the early 1980's and served for 12 years on the local school board. During that period McConachie also served as chair and interim director of a regional lobbying organization, ED-RED. "We had 125 school districts as members servicing a diversity of school districts from wealthy to very poor. This experience helped me understand the problems of schools statewide." She has been appointed to many state and national panels and was involved in the early stages of school reform including the development of standards, assessment, accountability, and promoting quality teachers.

McConachie attended high school in Wichita, Kansas, and graduated from Carlton with a degree in English, completed a



masters in English at Washington University, and continues to be a lifelong learner both professionally and in her personal life.

"Doing what is best for students has always been one of my firmest principles and I have had some interesting experiences as a result. As an idealistic young teacher, long ago and far away, I accompanied a talented student to his hearing before the school board which intended to expel him because his hair was too long. The school board should have been recognizing him for academic performance. I thought they were focused on the wrong issues and said so. They were not amused."

Challenges for the Illinois State Board of Education

McConachie was appointed to the Illinois State Board of Education by Governor Jim Edgar for a six-year term. She describes imple-

menting a reform agenda at the state and local levels as a great challenge. "Local school districts have to believe in higher standards to make change happen. We are trying numerous strategies including better public relations and more collaborative activities so that people will understand that a standards-based system holds performance constant and changes everything else, including the time it takes to learn and methods of instruction."

There is a perception at the local levels that the state board is constantly changing its mind. In fact, this agenda has been developing continuously for more than ten years and is now firmly placed in state law. It can really move forward, however, only with cooperation at the local level."

Joint Education Committee

Two people were selected to represent the ISBE on the Joint Education Committee. "I had served on the Illinois policy forum and was active in building the foundation for the P-16 partnership agreement, so I was selected."

Mr. Elzie Higginbottom, CEO, East Lake Management Corporation, Member of the Joint Education Committee Representing the Workforce Investment Board

Workforce Investment Board

"There was no magic to my appointment to the Workforce Investment Board; I have been a good friend and supporter of Governor George Ryan. He wants to take the Illinois workforce to another level that will be second to none. We are developing a system that includes education, business, and government working together. I co-chair the board with Hazel Loucks, the deputy governor for education, and we work well together."

Achieving Goals

"We made progress last year toward meeting the goals of the Workforce Investment Act, but workforce development is a much broader issue than just complying with this act. Workforce development should be responsive to the needs of the state's major stakeholders including the business community, the education community, organized labor, and all interested citizens--in developing a workforce system to address the needs of today and tomorrow. In the past we haven't emphasized a trained workforce including welfare to work, people who are employed but want to change their careers, and people who have been employed but have been laid off. The workforce system will meet these challenges head-on."

Joint Education Committee

"The JEC promotes a partnership between education, business, and



government to deal with education and to ensure that education and the curriculum are in tune with the needs of society. When we consider the problems in public schools, we can see that they have arisen because the stakeholders have been disconnected. The communication that occurs between stakeholders is very healthy and is useful in focusing on each other's priorities. Stakeholders have a great respect for each other, for the needs of education, and a good understanding idea of the issues associated with students, teachers, and technology. One key challenge is to prepare effective teachers and to retain them; another is preparing students not only for college, but for their careers and lives."

Background

"I graduated from the University of Wisconsin and worked for Baird and Warner in real estate finance and spent 18 years in different types of development from low-cost housing to high-end luxury developments. In 1985, I started my own company and set up a business that would serve the luxury market but also the affordable-housing market.

"I have been fortunate in having people who helped me along the way. My first mentor was a local attorney,

William Allan Nathanson, who encouraged my interest in the University of Wisconsin and helped me get an internship with Baird and Warner. John W. Baird was also a mentor and a guiding light as I moved up the real estate career ladder."

Views on Citizenship

"I am grateful for having been born in America. Coming from a minority group, I have experienced the negatives in our society and have faced them. But if you plan and have a goal and set objectives, you will find we live in a country that offers the greatest opportunities on the face of the earth. We should be thankful everyday for having the opportunity to live in this country.

"Responsibility, however, goes with these opportunities—you have to give back. Today many children don't understand citizenship. They understand only what the country and society owes them. But they don't understand that it is a two-way street. They also have responsibilities. As individuals we can bring interested parties to work in a common direction for the good and benefit of the citizens of the country. As good citizens, we can build a better and bigger country and reach across the world.

"Business can help education most by focusing on two areas: career needs and getting kids on the right career path. Business and education must decide what kind of training is needed for careers of the future. Do we need computer programmers or people who can design buildings or social workers or teachers? We need to establish a balance between what is needed and the education young people receive."

Walking in the Shoes of Preschoolers

Understanding Their World and Their View of other Generations

Jeanne Clark



It isn't unusual for children at the Intergenerational Day Care Center at Condell Medical Center to spend time with older people; in fact, it happens everyday with their daily grandparents. The children go down the hall to the living room and find older people waiting for them. They ask "their grandparent" to come to their classroom for a visit. Someone helps with positioning a walker, another a cane, and two youngsters gently turn a wheelchair around and head back to the classroom. The children have learned to walk slower, to hold hands, and never to shove or push when walking with an older adult.

In preschool, children's work is called play. They play with their daily grandparents and ask interesting questions. Children are curious about white hair, wrinkles on hands and faces, brown spots on the hands. For example, reading a story with Grandpa Bob, a 4-year-old noticed the brown spot on his hand. Grandpa Bob noticed the child studying his hand. He kept reading and the child touched the brown spot and looked at his own finger. Do those spots wash off?

Some older adults use canes and walkers and wheelchairs. What is more exciting than a gadget? Toys are fun, but real gadgets are better. Touching and moving these things dispels fears. Learning that this gadget is needed so that the grandparent can remain independent,



Above: Learning that this wheelchair is needed so that the grandparent can remain independent, suggests to the child that the grandparent may be in need of the preschooler's assistance. Over time this learning becomes a habit, a naturally occurring behavior based on respect. *At right:* Reading a story brought attention to the spots on Grandpa Bob's hands. "Do those spots wash off?"



suggests to the child that the grandparent may be in need of the preschooler's assistance. Over time this learning becomes a habit, a naturally occurring behavior based on respect.

Children love to pretend; to dress up in adults old clothing and be other people. Grandparents can praise and expound on their loveliness, how handsome or beautiful a child looks. What child does not crave or appreciate that undivided attention; that adult who is looking just at me, giving me time.

Music is a universal language, soothing and familiar. Children learn old favorites of the grandparents "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "You Are My Sunshine." Children teach the grandparents the "Barney Song" and tunes from "Sesame Street."

It is a mutually beneficial arrangement. Older adults from the center make a point of meeting the families and participating in center events (such as Kindergarten graduation) thus providing an additional extended family member. Families discuss the improved relationships their children have with their own grandparents and with older adults in the community at large since attending the center. Children meet with families of special grandparents who have passed away to exchange details of the wonderful experiences they had with their "grandparents" at the center. Children learn to reflect on



They exercise together and spend time together.

death in a positive way, and they help the families rejoice in the happy and productive lives of their elder members.

Children in intergenerational settings are exposed to role models for aging. They exercise together and spend time together. The children see older adults as lovable people, capable of special relationships. The children look past all of the frailties and into the people who are giving them the undivided attention and unconditional love nurturing their curiosity and learning about life. One little girl who had been in the program only two years went to first grade. The first day of school she asked her new teacher, "Where are the grandmas and grandpas?"

The Intergenerational Day Care Center at Condell Medical Center in Libertyville, has developed a program for day care for young children and for frail elderly. The building was designed and built with that function in mind. Condell residents include children from 6 weeks through 6 years and frail elderly over 55. Jeanne Clark, BSN, RN, MA is the Director.

Children and Older Adults Build a Sense of Community

Joy Paith

Preschoolers are children who enjoy life, look forward to almost every event, are enthusiastic, compliant, and also test their limits. Life is diverse because much is happening. They are learning new skills and building a base for

further learning as they prepare for their years in early grade school. A preschooler's daily activities would physically and emotionally exhaust us. Their openness is to be admired.

Samantha and Tyler are two children

who participate in Our World Intergenerational Care. They say they like to go over to visit the grandmas and grandpas and especially like to make special decorations for their walls. "The grandmas and grandpas are fun and they like to talk." If they haven't yet visited during the week the children will ask, "When are we going to see them?" The children and the older adults build a sense of community.



Children and older people discuss caring for pets.

Our World Intergenerational Center, located in O'Fallon, provides care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. The Adult Day Services provides comprehensive services for older adults who are in need of medical care or supervision. The mission is to provide services to enhance lives within the community. The executive director is Joy Paith.

Seeing Older People from the Eyes of a Preschooler

Shelley Levin

Children learn patience and gain a sense of history from their senior counterparts, perceiving the life-span as a developmental continuum. Listen to their comments, "Grandpa's yo-yo was wooden and mine is plastic." "We're different but we're the same, too." They develop an awareness of mores and social values. "When I talk, Grandma listens. When she talks, I listen." Having a grandpa or grandma to guide tricky puzzle parts into place and tie sashes on dress-up clothes comforts children and provides security and a sense of affirmation. "I made a good choice." That "okayness" translates into positive

self-esteem and empowers them to explore their environment as active learners. Children learn from an accepting senior that, "Whatever I do, I'm respected. I have value."



The Early Childhood Demonstration Centers are located in Skokie and Des Plaines, and are a part of Oakton Community College. Shelley Levin is the early childhood manager.

You can hear the children sitting around this table talking. My school is a happy place. It's where I play with Grandpa Al. He helps me build with blocks and reads stories and talks about his family. He tells us what he did at his school in the olden days. He's happy I'm his friend because his children live far away.

A Teenager Sees the World of a Preschooler

Crystal Schulte

According to many preschoolers at Bartelso Elementary School, the worst thing in their lives is picking up toys. They don't like cleaning but of course they love to make messes with their toys. Playing with toys is a major part of a preschooler's life.

Many preschoolers love to read books. The kinds of books vary by child. *Toy Story* is a preschool favorite. Children like the excitement in the book, and they find it humorous. Of course, a book about talking toys is fictional, but neat to listen to.

Often, preschoolers don't realize that they are really learning. They use toys to learn shapes, colors, counting, and

other important skills. They are taught how to count the number of blocks they have. They also have toy bears to learn colors. The teacher said that the children separate the bears into color piles. Then they identify the colors. The bears are also used for counting. The children count how many blue, red, green, and yellow bears there are. While counting and separating the bears, the children are also learning how to share. This helps them to share in their everyday lives. The best part is that the children don't understand that they are learning one of the most important things in life. In preschool, personal information has to be learned too. Some examples are their names, age, birthday, and home phone number. This helps the students prepare for kindergarten.



Crystal Schulte

During the time the preschoolers are with their teacher, they tell many humorous stories. Of course, their stories are mostly true, but they could embarrass the person the story is about. A couple of youngsters like to talk about their grandparents. One child told the teacher that Grandma takes her teeth out every night. Then, Grandma talks and looks funny. Now, this may be true, but then again, she could be a very embarrassed grandma if she knew!

Crystal Schulte is a student at Bartelso Elementary School.

Three and a Half

Jean Ahlburg

He is three and a half, and that *half* is very important to him. By using that special little word, he lets you know that he is older than merely three, but that he hasn't yet had his birthday, when he will actually be four. He imagines that being four will make him so big, so smart, so tall that he will probably make a hole in the ceiling of his grandmother's kitchen. At three and a half, he lives in a world of giants where practically everything is out of his reach, but he doesn't complain; he just can't wait until he's four!

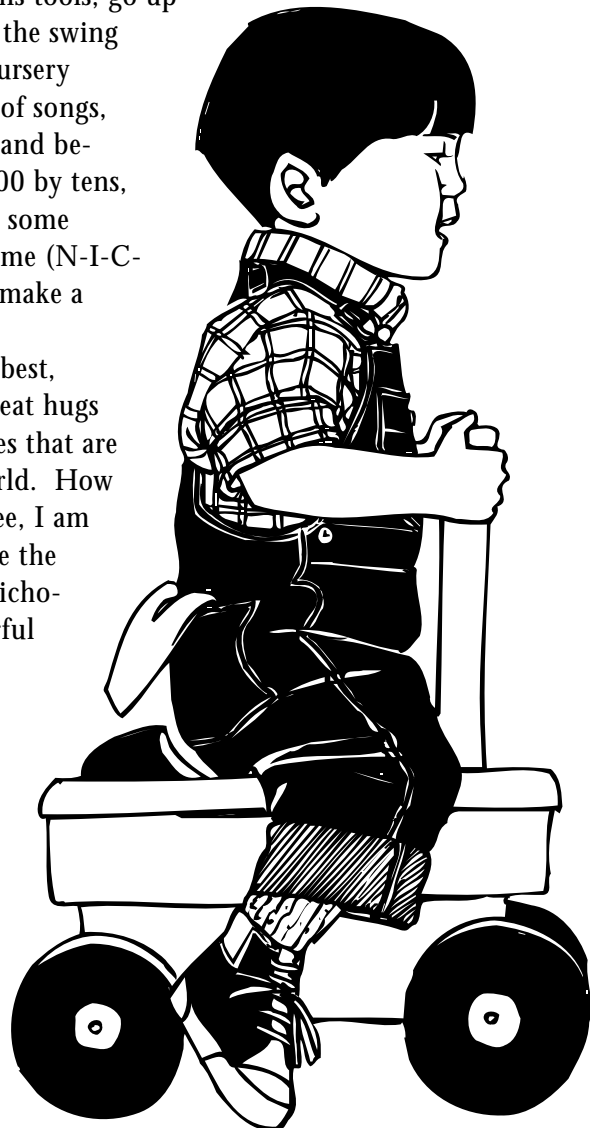
He likes, not listed in order of their importance, his mommy, his daddy, hugs, airplanes, Aunt Suzie, his space suit and helmet, peaches, butter cookies, all his books, fire engines, fire poles, fire trucks, firemen, his cats, Barney, and his baby sister—when she's not crying.

He is not fond of going to bed, going shopping, most vegetables, rabbits running by him quickly, spiders, loud noises, and his baby sister when she's crying.

He can jump really high, ride his bike with training wheels, help his dad put away his tools, go up the wrong way on the swing set's slide, recite nursery rhymes, sing a lot of songs, count to "infinity and beyond," count to 100 by tens, play soccer, "read" some books, spell his name (N-I-C-H-O-L-A-S), and make a beautiful *N*.

What he does best, however, is give great hugs and really big kisses that are the best in the world. How do I know? You see, I am lucky enough to be the grandmother of Nicholas, of this wonderful three, no, I mean three-and-a-half-year-old.

Jean Ahlburg is a retired teacher who lives in Springfield.



Linda Reneé Baker



Linda Reneé' Baker was appointed Secretary of the Department of Human Services (DHS) by Governor George Ryan. She is the second person to lead the mega agency and received a standing ovation when introduced to the General Assembly during the governor's State of the State Address.

"When I was under consideration for the job, I didn't know if I wanted it. One doesn't take lightly the tremendous responsibility of this position." She weighed the pros and cons, thought about the potential to make a difference in the lives of children, to help focus services, and the opportunity to have an impact on public policy. She thought to herself, Who are you to refuse this blessing?

Background

Secretary Baker was born in St. Louis and grew up in the Metro East Area. "My parents were my first teachers and I give them credit for teaching me the importance of hard work. They taught me that you must take advantage of the opportunities presented to you if they are right for you, and that you should not be afraid of challenges. They pushed me in many ways.

SECRETARY OF HUMAN SERVICES Illinois



They emphasized the value of an education, hard work, and responsibility to the community. Their attitude was that the sky is the limit; there is nothing I couldn't do.

"During my teen years, I talked about joining the Air Force. My father was a World War II veteran and he said, 'I don't think you want to go into the Air Force.' He wanted me to get an education." Father and daughter compromised and Baker obtained a job at the nearby Scott Air Force Base and continued her education.

She completed high school at East St. Louis High School and earned her baccalaureate degree in Health Administration and Finance, attending Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and then Sangamon State University (now the University of Illinois at Springfield). Public service became an interest while she was working as an intern right out of college. "I wanted to be where I could effect change." Later, she studied gerontology and earned a Masters Degree at Sangamon State University. Baker was also selected to participate in the Program for Senior Executives at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. She is currently working toward her doctorate in Public Administration.

Why did Governor Ryan select Baker for this position?

"The preparation for this position started early in my life, working in my church group and being a member of Del-Teens, an organization of high school girls. Through this group and my church, I learned about public speaking. In my family, each child gave an Easter speech. The longest speech was considered the best. We looked forward to it and prepared for it by sitting around the family table, discussing all that was happening in our lives. Preparation also came from my 15 years in Illinois state government with experience in the areas of human services, business and job development, and legislative affairs."

Baker comes to DHS from her last position as the director of the Illinois Department of Employment Security where she was instrumental in working with business, labor, education, local governments, and community-based organizations to revamp the state's workforce-development system. She was successful in bringing together those in the state who need employees and those who prepare individuals for employment.

Challenges for the Department of Human Services

The department has turned the corner on welfare. In 1997, more than 290,000 were on welfare. Now, there are around 80,000. We need to do two things. First, we need to find out who these remaining recipients are and what kinds of services they need to get off welfare. Second, we need to make sure that these families have access to services for child care, adequate mental health, substance abuse treatment, and other human services designed to help them remove barriers to self-sufficiency. We also need to integrate these services to maximize their effectiveness.

"The One-Stop Shop is an initiative that helps individuals get access to services in one convenient location and to learn about technology so they aren't on the wrong side of the digital divide. When DHS was created, the intention was to have comprehensive human services available in a 'seamless,' integrated fashion—with families at the center. We have made progress in co-locating services in our DHS local offices but there is still more work to be done.

"Since DHS was created, the Federal Workforce Investment Act was passed, authorizing this service-delivery concept for employment and training programs. It calls for services such as adult education, on-the-job training, job matching, and Unemployment Insurance to be co-located and integrated (to the extent possible). The Illinois Human Resource Investment Council/Illinois Workforce Investment Board voted to make the Department of Human Services' employment-related programs 'mandatory' one-stop partners. Because DHS had already begun to develop one-stop local offices for human services, it will be interesting to see how we can best expand in the community to become equal partners with our employment and training colleagues as well."

Quality Child Care and Education

"Child care remains a great challenge. Parents need care for their children during the day and increasingly during non-traditional hours.

One of the things we've seen is that as increasing numbers of women with children move off welfare, the demand for child care increases proportionately. The 'explosion' in child care, then, is tied to our state's successes in moving individuals from welfare to work.

"In addition to helping these families down the road to self-sufficiency, we are also realizing the benefits of children being placed in quality child-care programs. There is substantial evidence at this point that children with access to programs like Head Start and child care with enrichment components have greater success in school. So with child care,

we are investing our state's current families, as well as in our state's future families. To avoid or ameliorate the effects of developmental delays, early intervention programs are also important for children.

Young People

"Among the greatest stresses for young people is their increasing awareness that they are different from their parents and in some ways, although they try very hard not to be, different from their peers. Young people must be helped to understand that it is okay to be different. For example, I was talking with a child in a wheelchair, who mentioned that her biggest fear was going to another school because she was different. We must help these young people focus on their similarities while celebrating their differences. We need to get the message across that each child needs to be the best that he or she can be and that one's best is always good enough."

Older

I am a student of gerontology and I understand the importance and

value of independence to older people. They were the generation that built this country. They have pride and we owe them respect and a debt of gratitude. We must make sure that they have the support they need (in every sense of the word whether financial, physical, or social) to remain as independent as possible."

When your tenure at DHS is finished, what do you hope to have accomplished?

"I really hope that DHS will have moved to a fully integrated system of providing services to address the needs of entire families rather than just the needs of single individuals. Many families have multiple barriers that are temporary in nature--temporary if they receive assistance in overcoming them. By integrating services, I think we have a real opportunity to help families address their barriers more quickly. For people who require services to sustain them, I hope that DHS will be perceived as a department that provides services with maximum dignity, respect and client choice."

The Illinois Department of Human Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services provides most of the state-administered services for addressing mental illness, developmental disability, and alcoholism and substance abuse, and provides vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities, including services for the visually impaired. In addition, the department provides cash assistance and food stamps, employment programs, child care, social service and youth services programs, and

health-related direct service and prevention programs, such as Women Infants and Children's nutrition program.

The department provides a service-delivery system that enables clients to seek solutions to their various needs through a one-stop coordinated intake approach. The primary focus of the department is on providing needed services to individuals and families while assisting them to become self-sufficient members of society.

Can We Climb the Mountain?

Attaining Quality Preschool

There is a growing body of research that tells us that success in higher education, and throughout the educational experience, begins with preschool. It sounds like common sense. Yet on closer scrutiny we discover that it is the most growing area of education and yet the most vulnerable. Experts estimate that less than 10% of the preschools and early care facilities are accredited and less than 25% could be considered a quality experience.

The cover story ask the question, can we climb the mountain? and presents a series of articles describing the plight of preschools. The accreditation process is key to attaining quality

preschool, and yet it is a time-consuming task that few have the resources to achieve. The ten criteria of accreditation end this section so that all of us can understand the importance of a quality preschool and realize that we need community action.

Higher education is known for stimulating new thinking and finding creative solutions to the perplexing needs. Attaining quality preschool is a solvable dilemma, it is simply a challenge that we have to put front and center. If we want to provide an educational system that is the first and finest, our first step is to begin at the beginning—with early learning and care.

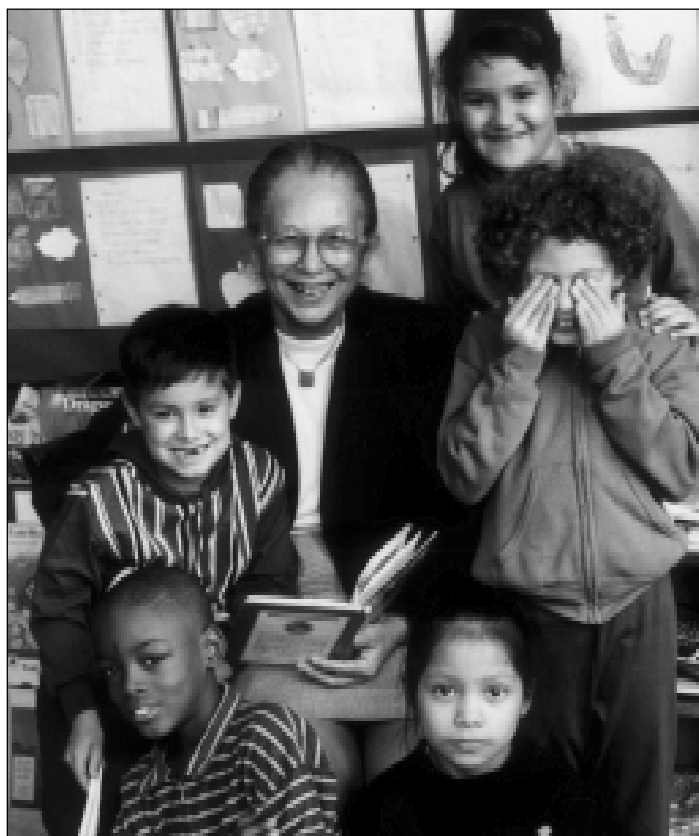
Why the Concern About Early Care and Education?

Barbara Bowman

Over the past 25 years there has been an explosion of knowledge about child development that has implications for how young children are cared for and educated. For example: we now know that children's learning begins earlier than we thought. Infants as young as six months can recognize different number sets and are beginning to discard sounds not needed in the language or languages they hear spoken around them. We know that early learning is more important than we had thought. Children who do not learn to love others as infants and young children may have their social development permanently derailed and

those who do not begin to learn literacy concepts during their preschool years have more difficulty learning to read. We also know that the children's development is holistic and, therefore, how much children eat is as relevant to their learning as their school curriculum. Foods, warmth, protection, responsive and loving care, consistency, time to self regulate, and opportunities to explore, learn and play are all necessary for healthy development.

While much of development is driven by genetic (both human and individual) characteristics, the environment facilitates or impedes these genetic predispositions. Poverty often acts as a constraint on development because it causes stress, restricts resources, and fosters hopelessness. Therefore, low-income children are at greater developmental risk than children from more economically secure families. There are also individual differences in how well children develop and learn. Some children, no matter what their economic level, need more support than to do other children-but it is sometimes hard to tell who these children are early in life. The best strategy therefore, is to provide a good quality environment for all children and to be on the lookout for children who are at greater than average risk and provide extra resources for them. Unfortunately, the cost of good quality care and education is beyond the means of families. Yet, poor and mediocre quality care and education do not support healthy development and learning and may have a deleterious effect on otherwise able children.



Children who are developing well generally will learn the skills and knowledge that are valued in their natural environment; they learn to love, to categorize, to observe and remember without much instruction from adults. However, school learning is different from natural learning. For example, children learn to talk like their friends and relatives without much help but learning to read and write and manipulate large sets of numbers requires teaching from knowledgeable adults. As our expectations for children's achievement increases, children are increasingly disadvantaged who live in natural environments that prepare them for the later challenges of school.

Many people concerned about children's school achievement wonder what to do to make sure that all children learn at the high level required in a technological society. Often it is assumed that all we need to do is wait until children are school age and teach them what they do not know—but it is more complicated than that. In order to

learn well, children must have loving and responsive relationships with others beginning in infancy. These early relationships play a powerful role in children's later relationships with teachers and lay the foundation for social attitudes and interest in learning. When parents are unable to provide a responsive and responsible care environment as when they are depressed, or overstressed, or unavailable children do not learn well unless other adults take up the slack. Being well cared for then, is critical to children becoming effective learners. Healthy development and learning require providing responsive and loving care, as well as teaching children skills and knowledge.

*Barbara Bowman,
President Erikson Institute*



ERIKSON INSTITUTE

Erikson was established in 1966 and is a private graduate school and research center for advanced study in child development, affiliated with Loyola University, Chicago. The core programs include master's degree in early childhood development, doctoral degree in child development, undergraduate degree in early childhood teacher education and leadership program. Erikson is the only independent institution of higher learning that focuses exclusively on

educating leaders in early childhood development. The current Erikson student body of 170 consists of working professionals from diverse backgrounds, all committed to gaining the knowledge, skills, and insight to give children the strongest possible start in life. Seventy percent of Erikson graduates work in the Chicago area. Barbara Bowman was named president in 1994. For further information, www.erikson.edu or 312-755-2250.



We Can Help

1. Help the public understand the relationship between early care and education and school achievement.
2. Encourage communities to plan an effective early childhood system that includes early screening, good quality childcare and education, effective intervention for children at risk, and coordination between the early care and education system and the schools, health and social service agencies.
3. Recognize many parents and low-income communities cannot adequately fund good quality care and education or needed interventions. Explore funding mechanisms that engage government, business, and not-for-profit groups as well as parents.
4. Encourage governments to simplify funding and regulation and confront inconsistency and confusion without diminishing standards.

The Semantics of Early Childhood

Wanda Y. Newell

Creating a seamless early care and education system is to semantics as the Tower of Babel is to language. As you may recall, the Tower of Babel represents a lesson in collaboration and communication. According to scripture (Genesis 11), early Babylonian settlers joined together to build a city. This city would be special and different from other cities because it would have a tower that reached to the sky. At first everything went well for the builders. They spoke the same language and shared a common goal. The story line shifts from success to disaster when God confounded the builders' speech. They could no longer understand each other because now each person spoke a different language. The scripture ends with the pronouncement that the Tower of Babel was not completed and that the Babylonians scattered throughout the world.

Child Development

Clear communication has not always been an easy task for professionals in early care and education. Unfortunately, the major reason for the miscommunication has to do with the two distinct approaches used in viewing early childhood.

The child development viewpoint emphasizes the nature of early development. Many scientists in this area focus their research on the impact of child-rearing practices, deprivation, and cultural experiences on the lives of young children. They also look specifically at how

those factors affect learning. These scientists spend a considerable amount of time studying the needs of poor working families—particularly their critical need for child care. Focusing on early development, rather than schooling, has helped to perpetuate a legacy of miscommunication.

Early Childhood Education

The other general viewpoint used to frame early childhood issues is education. This framework focuses specifically on cognitive development. Many of the early schools for young children model their ideas on John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Sigmund Freud, and others because they emphasize education more than development and place a high premium on teaching children to learn. The major thrust of this education perspective is to prepare children for school and school-related activities. The early childhood programs, consequently, provide experiences that promote intellectual growth. Clearly, the scientists in the field of education speak a different language from the scientists in child development.

The Need to Unite Child Care and Education

Most professionals in the field of child development and early childhood education advocate uniting the best of the disciplines in a clear seamless, high-quality, service-delivery system. We know from longitudinal, randomized studies that intensive early care and education programs increase the likelihood of school success and reduce later social risk —

school drop-out and delinquency—for poor children. We know less about the effects of high-quality early care and education for middle- and upper-class children. Individuals in the fields of child development and education are now prepared to close the historical gap that has for years promoted fragmentation in both child care and education. Unfortunately, a seamless early care and education system will be difficult to establish as long as individuals and stakeholders in the field do not address early care and education issues head-on.

Addressing Discrepancies in Early Care and Education

To build a seamless early care and education system, we must first start by reducing and limiting discrepancies that exist between child care and education. There are major discrepancies in professional training, qualification requirements, and pay for individuals that work in child care and early childhood education.

Next, we must address the discrepancies in our terminology.

We must seek to speak the “same language.” Early care and education terminology need to be standardized. Standardizing early care and education terms would allow for better communication throughout the field. It would also help early care and education advocates to interpret federal and state legislation and policies that affect funding streams, and to review program management and program development. Finally, we must address the discrepancies in how children’s services are funded and identify funding sources that address and make provisions for the “whole child.”

The Role of Health and Social Services

We cannot overlook the importance of health and social service in early care and education settings. They are crucial in helping us establish the objective of a clear, seamless system to meet the needs of children and families. Having a health consultant or social worker available makes it less difficult to assist families who are not well-served find additional services that best meet their needs.

Conclusion

The Babylonian builders did not complete their mission to build the Tower of Babel because they lost the ability to effectively communicate with one another. We can learn from their mistake. The question of whether we will be able to build a high-quality seamless service-delivery system for young children remains to be seen. The answer lies in our ability to clarify how we communicate. I am certain that once we learn how to speak the “same language” across professional disciplines, will we be able to build a seamless, high-quality service delivery system for young children.

Wanda Y. Newell, Ph.D.

Education Program Director

Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation



ROBERT R. McCORMICK TRIBUNE FOUNDATION

Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation was originally established as a charitable trust upon the death, in 1955, of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, the long-time editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. McCormick played a major role in American journalism during the first half of the twentieth century, and built the Tribune Company from a single newspaper into a

major media organization of newspapers, radio, and TV stations, and newsprint manufactories.

One of the foundations major program areas is its education program. The education program focuses on early childhood education, specifically the education of children from birth to age 5. It is designed to improve the quality of early childhood education programs (Head Start and

child care programs, and family child care homes) in the Chicago metropolitan area. The foundation’s priority is to address the needs of children from low income families.

Wanda Newell is the Program Director and is new to the Foundation. She is originally from Mississippi and formerly directed the institute and taught courses at Mississippi State University.

Rethinking the Brain

Rima Shore

A father comforts a crying newborn. A mother plays peekaboo with her ten-month-old. A child care provider reads to a toddler. And in a matter of seconds, thousands of cells in these children's growing brains respond. Some brain cells are "turned on," triggered by this particular experience. Many existing connections are strengthened. At the same time, new connections are formed, adding a bit more definition and complexity to the intricate circuitry that will remain largely in place for the rest of these children's lives.

We didn't always know it worked this way. Until recently, it was not widely believed that the brains of human infants could be so active and so complex. Nor did we realize how flexible the brain is. Only 15 years ago, neuroscientists assumed that by the time babies are born, the structure of their brains was genetically determined. They did not recognize that the experiences that fill a baby's first days, months, and years have such a decisive impact on the architecture of their brains, or on the nature and extent of their adult capacities. Today, thanks in part to decades of research on brain chemistry and sophisticated new technologies, neuroscientists are providing evidence for assertions that would have been greeted with skepticism ten or twenty years ago.

Every field of endeavor has peak moments of discovery and opportunity, when past knowledge converges with new needs, new insights, and new technologies to produce stunning advances. For neuroscience, this

is one such moment. Brain research has been stimulated, in part, by growing concern about the status of children in America—not only their academic achievement, but also their health, safety, and overall well-being. Two decades of research on healthy child development and the evaluation of many early intervention and school reform initiatives have confirmed the importance of the first three years of life. Given these findings, there is growing consensus, among decision makers in many fields, that efforts to recast policy and reconsider the best use of public resources must begin at the beginning—with clearheaded thinking about young children's brains.

Five Key Lessons

Five Key Lessons have the potential to reframe research, policy, and practice in diverse fields.

1. Human development hinges on the interplay between nature and nurture.

Much of our thinking about the brain has been dominated by old assumptions—that the genes we are born with determine how our brains develop, and that in turn how our brains develop determines how we interact with the world. Recent brain research challenges these assumptions. Neuroscientists have found that throughout the entire process of development, beginning even before birth, the brain is affected by environmental conditions, including the kind of nourishment, care, surroundings, and stimulation an individual receives. The impact of the environment is dramatic and specific, not merely influencing the general direction of development, but actually affecting how the intricate circuitry of the human brain is "wired." And because every individual is exposed to different experiences, no two brains are wired the same way.

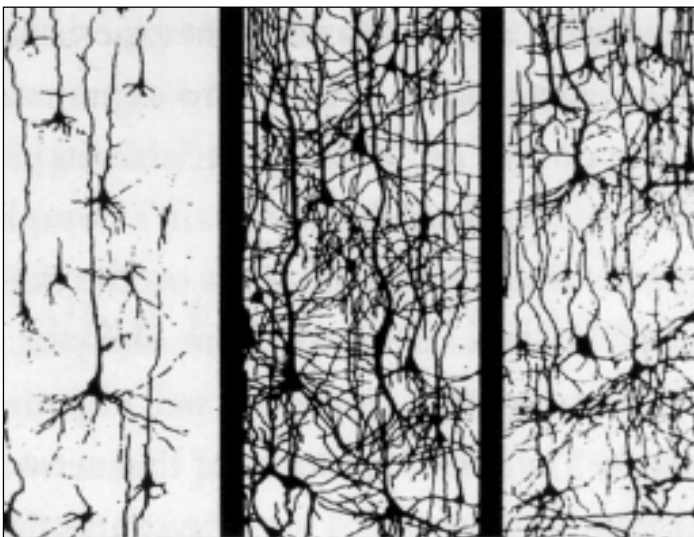
The notion of "wiring" or "circuitry" is often used to describe

Brain Development in Young Children

In June 1996, a two-day conference was convened at the University of Chicago by the Families and Work Institute to discuss new knowledge about early brain development and its implications for children in the United States. Entitled *Brain Development in Young Children: New Frontiers for Research, Policy and Practice*, the conference sprang from the conviction that not just parents and families,

but the nation as a whole has a vital stake in its youngest citizens' healthy development and learning. The conference brought together professionals from the neurosciences, medicine, education, human services, the media, business, and public policy to look at what we know about the brain and how that knowledge can and should inform efforts to improve results for children and their families.

the brain's complex network. Brain function hinges on the rapid, efficient passage of signals from one part of the brain to another. It needs a well organized network. The building blocks of this network are brain cells (neurons) and the connections (synapses) they form to other brain cells. These synapses are vital to healthy development and learning: they link up to form



Synapses are created with astonishing speed in the first three years of life. For the rest of the first decade, children's brains have twice as many synapses as adult brains.

Drawing by H.T. Chungani.

neural pathways. As an individual interacts with the environment—reacting to stimuli, taking in information, processing it, or storing it, new signals race along these neural pathways. In neuroscientists' terms, the synapses and the pathways they form are “activated.”

At birth, an infant has about 100 billion neurons—nearly enough to last a lifetime. Each one can produce up to 15,000 synapses. The first three years of life are when the vast majority of synapses is produced. The number of synapses

increases with astonishing rapidity until about age three and then holds steady throughout the first decade of life. In this way, a child's brain becomes super-dense, with twice as many synapses as it will eventually need. In the second decade of life, most of these excess synapses are eliminated. Brain development is, then, a process of pruning.

This is why early experience is

so crucial: those synapses that have been activated frequently by virtue of repeated early experience tend to become permanent; the synapses that have not been used at all, or often enough, tend to be eliminated. As

babies and toddlers gain more experience, positive or negative, the brain's wiring becomes more defined. This process requires considerable energy; for most of the first decade of life, children's brains are more than twice as active as those of adults.

2. Early care has a decisive, longlasting impact on how people develop, their ability to learn, and their capacity to regulate their own emotions.

Parents and other caregivers have long known that babies thrive when they receive warm, responsive early care; now we are beginning to understand the biological mechanisms that underlie this common knowledge.

Warm, responsive caregiving not only meets babies' basic, day-to-day needs for nourishment and warmth, but also responds to their preferences, moods, and rhythms. Recent brain research suggests that this kind of caregiving is not only comforting for an infant; it plays a vital role in healthy development. The ways that parents, families, and other caregivers relate and respond to their young children, and the ways that they mediate their children's contact with the environment, directly affect the formation of neural pathways.

In particular, a child's capacity to control emotions appears to hinge, to a significant extent, on biological systems shaped by his or her early experiences and attachments. There is no single “right” way to create this capacity; warm, responsive care can take many forms. But children who are emotionally neglected or abandoned very early in life often have difficulty with such brain-mediated functions as empathy, attachment, and emotional expression.

3. The human brain has a remarkable capacity to change, but timing is crucial.

There is mounting evidence of the brain's neuroplasticity. This means that the brain has the capacity to change in important ways in response to experience. We now have scientific evidence that the brain is not a static entity, and that an individual's capacities are not fixed at birth. The brain itself can be altered—or helped to compensate for problems—with appropriately timed, intensive intervention. In the first decade of life, and particularly in the first few years, the brain's ability to change and compensate is especially remarkable.

Because the brain has the capacity to change, parents and other family members, friends, child care providers, teachers, doctors, and human service providers have ample opportunities to promote and support children's healthy growth and development. But timing is crucial. While learning continues throughout the life cycle, there are optimal periods of opportunity—"prime times" during which the brain is particularly efficient at specific types of learning. For example, the part of the brain that processes visual information develops during a particular time span early in life. If the brain receives no visual input during that period, an individual's vision will be compromised.

4. The brain's plasticity also means that there are times when negative experiences or the absence of appropriate stimulation are more likely to have serious and sustained effects.

New knowledge about the vulnerability of the developing brain to environmental factors suggests that early exposure to nicotine, alcohol, and drugs (in utero and in the postnatal environment) may have more harmful and long-lasting effects on young children than was previously suspected.

Estimates of the percentage of women who smoke cigarettes during pregnancy range from 14 to 25 percent. Some cut down rather than stopping altogether when they are planning to conceive, or when they learn that they are expecting a child. And very often, children born to smokers show no apparent adverse effects. But a number of studies indicate that maternal smoking during pregnancy can, in some cases, affect brain development, inhibiting neuron growth.

5. Evidence amassed by neuroscientists and child development experts over the last decade point to the wisdom and efficacy of prevention and early intervention.

There are, to be sure, some genetic disorders or neurological events (such as a massive stroke) whose consequences are difficult if not impossible to reverse, given current knowledge and methods. But study after study shows that intensive, well designed, timely intervention can improve the prospects-and the quality of life-of

"the early years are certainly crucial for healthy development, but there must also be strong support for school-age children and adolescents, as well as for adults who want to continue their education and strengthen their skills."

many children who are considered to be at risk of cognitive, social, or emotional impairment. In some cases, effective intervention efforts can even ameliorate conditions once thought to be virtually untreatable, such as autism or mental retardation.

A number of well documented studies of programs designed to help infants and toddlers and their families suggest that well conceived, well implemented programs can brighten children's futures. The efficacy of early

intervention has been demonstrated and replicated in diverse communities across the nation. Children from families with the least formal education appear to derive the greatest cognitive benefits from intervention programs. Moreover, the impact of early intervention appears to be long-lasting, particularly when there is follow-up during the elementary school years.

Should we withdraw resources from older children and give them to young children?

How should we, as a nation, invest in the next generation, given the importance of early development? Should public education begin sooner and end earlier? If so, which agencies or organizations should provide that early education? Should we fund high schools at lower levels, in order to devote adequate resources to child care and early education? The relationship between budgets and policies is always complex, and there is no simple solution. But ensuring children's healthy development is not a zero-sum game. To be sure, good nutrition is vital in the prenatal period and the first years of life, but the needs of young children cannot justify skimping on the nourishment provided to older children and youth. By the same token, the early years are certainly crucial for healthy development, but there must also be strong support for school-age children and adolescents, as well as for adults who want to continue their education and strengthen their skills. Optimal development and learning must be a top national priority for Americans of all ages, so that a good start in life for our youngest children is not purchased at the expense of their older brothers and sisters.

***Rima Shore
Families and Work Institute, New York***

Special Needs Children and their Families

Rosa Milagros Santos

It is not uncommon today to find young children with disabilities and those at risk for future developmental delays participating in school and community programs and settings along with their peers without disabilities. Including children with special needs in programs and settings in which they are with their peers without disabilities is often referred to as *inclusion*. The basic premise for *inclusion* is that children with special needs have the opportunity to participate in activities, programs, and settings in which they would be if they did not have a disability. Examples of some of these activities, programs and settings include playgroups, childcare centers, summer camps, Head Start programs, and preschool classrooms.

The benefits of *inclusion* have been well documented. Parents and family members, teachers, administrators, and researchers have noted the advantages of *inclusion* not only to children with special needs but also to children without disabilities, to program staff, to family members and to the community. One notable advantage of *inclusion* is that children learn well from each other. Children without disabilities often become models for their peers with disabilities and vice versa. For example, children learn how to behave in certain situations by watching and imitating each other. In the dramatic play area in Mrs. Samson's preschool classroom,

children learn to share toys with each other. Jaime, a 4-year old boy with Down's Syndrome and his friends, Elaine and Bennett learn to take turns playing with the toys in the play area as they bake pretend breads and cakes for their bakeshop.

Children also learn to value, appreciate, and accept individual differences. They learn that each one has something worthwhile to contribute in spite of some obvious and not-so-obvious challenges. In our diverse communities, acceptance and tolerance of differences, whether they be differences in abilities, race, gender, ethnicity, language or religion, are important values for all children to learn at an early age.

Adults play a large role in facilitating the successful *inclusion* of children with special needs in school and community programs and settings. Each must have the willingness, commitment and desire to make this work for all children, their families and the community. Typically, a lack of understanding and knowledge about disability and *inclusion* serve as a barrier. Being proactive in learning more about disabilities and *inclusion* may help one overcome some of these barriers. More importantly it is best to remember that children with or without disabilities are in fact **children first**. No matter their abilities, children require the love and support of their families and the commitment from their community

to have equal opportunities (and the right) to participate in activities and to access services that will help them reach their full potential.

Federal legislation and national initiatives for infant and preschool programs have served as impetus for the development and implementation of numerous exemplary and promising early intervention programs and practices in Illinois as well as in other parts of the country.

To learn more about early intervention programs and practices and other information related to disabilities, please visit the Website of the Division for Early Childhood at <<http://www.dec-sped.org/>> <<http://www.dec-sped.org/>> **OR** the Council for Exceptional Children at <<http://www.cec.sped.org/>> **OR** contact the school district nearest you.

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Accreditation and Quality Child Care

Jamilah R. Jor'dan

Choosing child care is one of the most difficult decisions parents/families will face. Families' reliance on child care has risen significantly over the past 30 years.

More than two-thirds of all infants receive nonparental child care during their first year of life, with most enrolled for about 30 hours each week. In 1993, 9.9 million children under age 5 needed care while their mothers worked. Another 22.3 million children ages 5 to 14 have working mothers, and many of them require care outside school hours.

Increasingly, by necessity and choice, families turn to professional caregivers and early childhood programs for support. Families have different child care needs and they need to decide what type of child care setting (center or home-based) will meet their needs. Also, cost, availability of service and convenience are factors which need to be considered. When the time comes, choosing caregivers and early childhood programs which reflect the highest standards, particularly those which are accredited, is an important thing families can do. While the accreditation process examines the total program, emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions among staff and children and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum—what is the child's experience in the program?

What is Accreditation?

Early childhood program accreditation means that an early childhood program - child care center, pre-

school, kindergarten, or before-and/or after-school program voluntarily applied for accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs the accreditation department of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high quality program for young children and their families.

What is a quality early childhood program?

Quality early childhood programs can be found in a school, church, preschool, day care center, Head Start program, home, among other settings. Whatever the setting early childhood teachers/caregivers form the foundation for the future success in school and life. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs defines a high quality early childhood program as one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and adults—families, staff, and administrators—who are involved in the program. Quality programs are developmentally appropriate meaning the activities and materials are "appropriate" for the child's age and meets the child's individual needs.

Although there are many different types of child care the following are indicators that individuals should look for or inquire about when observing or selecting quality child care programs:



Teacher /child interactions.

Observe the interactions between the staff and children to see if they are actively involved with each other and with various materials and activities. Do adults engage children in conversation? Talk to children at eye level?

Curriculum. Are there a wide variety of materials available for children? Are the materials accessible? Are the materials geared to the interests and developmental level of the child? Is there balance between child-directed and teacher-initiated activities? Are the materials in the environment reflective of the population served? Are there materials in the environment that teach children the value of diversity?

Staff/child ratios and group sizes. Ratios and group sizes are important predictors of quality. Research strongly suggests that smaller group sizes and larger numbers of staff to children are related to positive outcomes for children such as increased interaction among adults and children, enhanced language, social, and intellectual development in children; less aggression, and more cooperation among children. For infants, groups should not exceed 6 to 8 children. Group size will increase with age, but should not exceed 20 for older preschool children and 24 for school-age children.

Low staff turnover. This is important in order to reduce the anxiety caused by changing faces and styles of handling. Consistency is important so the caregiver is familiar with the background, needs and interests of the child. One should ask about the rate of turnover and the steps that are being taken to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development. The quality of the staff is the most important factor of the quality of an early childhood program.

Teachers with a strong knowledge of early childhood development understand children's needs at different stages of their development. They have realistic expectations for children, are more sensitive and responsive to the children in their care. On-going professional development is important and provides opportunities for staff to keep current with practices in the field and emerging issues.

Program Administration. The way a program is administered will affect all the interactions within the program. Effective administration includes good communication, positive community relations, fiscal stability, and attention to the needs and working conditions of staff members.

Physical Environment. The physical environment affects the behavior and development of the people, both children and adults, who live and work in the environment. The indoor and outdoor environment should be designed to promote involvement in daily activities. The amount of space should be sufficient for the number of children enrolled in the program. Activity areas should be identifiable.

Relationships among Teachers and Families. Parent/family involvement is important because they are the primary influence in the child's life. All communication between program staff and families should be two-way. Close communication and trust between the teacher and child's family will

help ease family members concerns and will help children benefit from their experience in the child care program.

Health and Safety. The environment should be safe and healthy for children. Check to see if the program is licensed and whether or not the license is current. Licensing represents minimum standards for safety, supervision and cleanliness. If the program is exempt from licensing, the program should meet state or local building code, sanitation code, and licensing code for early childhood programs/child care centers subject to licensing. Note whether or not the building is clean, safe, attractive, well-lighted and ventilated. Is the equipment clean and in good condition? Good quality early childhood programs act to prevent illness and accidents, are prepared to deal with emergencies that occur, and also educate children concerning safe and healthy practices.

Nutrition and food service. Meals and/or snacks are planned to meet the child's nutritional requirements as recommended by the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the United States Department of Agriculture in proportion to the amount of time the child is in the program each day. Are children served well-balanced meals? Are eating utensils and portions child-sized? Is the eating experience pleasurable? Is conversation encouraged?

What are the benefits?

A good early childhood program benefits the child, family and the community. To succeed, children need quality learning

experiences before they get to school—especially during the first four years of their lives, when most brain development occurs. The early childhood years are the most important learning years. At least 80 percent of human brain development occurs in the first 2-1/2 years of life. Studies suggest that a child's ability to learn can increase or decrease by 25 percent or more, depending on whether he or she grows up in a stimulating environment. The importance of children's early experiences to future development cannot be minimized.

Children who attend quality early childhood programs:

1. Are better prepared to adjust to kindergarten and school.

2. Demonstrate greater skills on tests of cognitive ability and language development.

3. Are assigned to special education programs less frequently.

4. Demonstrate greater social competence as preschoolers, in kindergarten and primary grades and in secondary school years.

5. Show greater motivation for learning and commitment to schooling.

6. Are more likely to graduate and pursue post-secondary education or training.

Individuals need to observe and ask lots of questions to obtain the information that is needed to assess the quality of an early childhood program. For families, it is espe-

cially important to periodically assess their child care arrangements to make sure it is meeting their child's needs as well as their own. For a list of accredited child care programs in Chicago or Illinois contact the Chicago Accreditation Partnership at (312) 554-1300.

Jamilah R. Jor'dan, M.Ed.
Executive Director of the Chicago
Accreditation Partnership



Chicago Accreditation Partnership

On October 13, 1998, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced a \$16 million initiative to improve the quality of child care centers in Chicago. Known as the Chicago Accreditation Partnership, this initiative is a five-year public-private partnership to improve the quality of early childhood education, Head Start and child care programs in Chicago's low-income communities. The Partnership is the first of its kind in the nation to assist eligible child care programs pursue accreditation or reaccreditation. The Partnership will assist 400 early childhood programs serving low-income children in Chicago.

Accreditation provides early childhood professionals with nationally recognized criteria for high quality care and education. Accreditation is a professional, voluntary self-study system.

The Chicago Accreditation Partnership will pay 100% of the costs associated with pursuing accreditation—this may include fees, books, toys and other developmentally appropriate materials, physical improvements and repairs, and classroom furniture. In addition, individual program consultations and professional development opportunities will be available for child care providers and center directors. The Partnership will also advocate for increased salaries for child care providers to ensure programs retain qualified personnel. In addition, the Partnership will also advocate for effective changes in state child care policies, and develop a public awareness campaign that addresses the importance of quality child care.

The Partnership is funded by the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care (including

Allstate, Amoco, AT&T, Citibank, Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLD and IBM Corporation), the City of Chicago, the Harris Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the Polk Bros. Foundation, the Prince Charitable Trusts, the Pritzker Cousins Foundation, and the United Way/Crusade of Mercy Success by 6®.

The Chicago Accreditation Partnership brings together highly credentialed individuals from the early childhood education profession to facilitate the accreditation process for successful program applicants. Jamilah R. Jor'dan serves as the Executive Director, holds a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from Erikson Institute, is a doctoral candidate in Research Methodology/Human Development at Loyola University Chicago and has worked in the field for 15 years.

The Perils of Accreditation

Judy Harris Helm, Ed.D.

Supporting Quality Early Childhood Experiences

There are major problems with how early care and education is provided for the majority of children in Illinois. These problems include an inadequate salary for child care staff, high staff turnover, and limited training. A focus and reliance on accreditation as a means of achieving quality puts the responsibility on the center and the center's staff, yet the issues go beyond the walls of the center to the community. How our youngest children will be nurtured, cared for, and educated are issues that need to be addressed by the community as a whole.

Lack of Infrastructure for Quality

Gallagher and Clifford (2000) of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina conclude that current programs for children outside the home lack a comprehensive infrastructure or support system to stand behind the delivery of services to the child and family. The term *infrastructure*, a substructure or underlying foundation, is especially appropriate because it invites comparison to the other ways that we support and maintain installations and institutions that support communities. There is a vast infrastructure that supports the quality of health care, another that supports schools. But the majority of providers of early childhood programs are on their own and have minimal assis-

tance. It is also worth noting that many of the programs in downstate Illinois that do achieve accreditation are publicly funded programs such as public school preschool programs, Head Start, and laboratory schools. These programs access the infrastructure of the host school system, university, or a national organization. Yet in Peoria, for example, less than one fourth of the children are in such programs.

Accreditation is an efficient way to work toward and recognize quality in early childhood programs. It provides a yardstick to measure quality and a way to set goals. For those programs with an infrastructure that enables them to keep well-trained staff, to provide adequate preparation time, to maintain data systems, and to coordinate support services, accreditation can be a quality enhancement. It is effective and works well. But for those programs that do not have the infrastructure, without changes in that infrastructure, the process may be overwhelming and discouraging. As I talk to directors and teachers I find that the decision not to pursue accreditation is based on a lack of time, a reluctance to begin a labor-intensive process, and a lack of resources to correct concerns.

In many places around the country, a variety of approaches have been taken to help centers interested in the accreditation process to get the work done. This assistance can take the form of providing mentors from accredited programs, offering support

groups, supplying onsite consultation and financial incentives. Many of these approaches, such as the one taken by the Chicago Accreditation Project, have been very successful. The most effective accreditation-support projects provide not just help with the paperwork but also help with concerns identified through the self-study process such as inadequate playground equipment and lack of training in specific areas. These projects are providing what the infrastructure lacks is connection with other professionals, help with data collection, and financial support for quality.

***Directors of early
childhood programs
see these accredita-
tion projects as a
short-term help, a
boost but not
an answer.***

Still, recruitment to these projects can be a challenge. One of the reasons may be that centers and directors of early childhood programs without public support see these accreditation projects as short-term help, a boost but not an answer. They may fear that the self-study could reveal concerns that they do not have the resources to correct. They may fear that support, while there for the accreditation process, will not be there

for the long haul. Many early childhood programs today are struggling just to meet minimal requirements such as hiring enough staff to meet child-to-staff ratio requirements and health and safety needs. In programs that provide full daycare there is little opportunity for reflection. As a consequence, there is little time for gathering data, discussing quality, and working on improvements.

Providing support for the accreditation process, while a step in the right direction, can give us the dangerous feeling that we are doing something about the infrastructure problems when we are not. Accreditation can be a measure, a sign of the health of a community's early childhood system. Like a thermometer measures body temperature, the accreditation system can tell us a great deal about early childhood education in our community: who becomes accredited, what concerns are revealed in self-studies and who doesn't even try. However, just as an aspirin can reduce the numbers on the thermometer and give a false sense of improvement, so can accreditation of centers give us a false feeling that we are doing something about the support systems necessary for quality care. Changes that produce quality need to be changes in the infrastructure. These changes require deep thought, collaboration, and commitment of the community—not just the center. When this community-wide commitment happens, accreditation will be easy, inviting, and productive.

Judy Harris Helm, Ed.D. is the CEO of Best Practices, a company that promotes quality early learning and care.

Statewide Accreditation Mentoring Project

Kathy Howard

There are 402 National Association for the Education of young Children (NAEYC) accredited programs in Illinois. According to estimates by NAEYC and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, the number of programs accredited represents only 7% of those eligible for accreditation. That means that approximately 6,000 programs are not accredited, including privately owned pre-schools, Head Start programs, child care centers, public school pre-K programs, and campus child care.

The Statewide Accreditation Mentoring Project known as the SAM Project, is an initiative of the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children. Pat Steinhaus, immediate past president and Jane Thomas, treasurer, wrote the grant that was funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services. The goal of the SAM Project is to provide assistance to child-care providers, during the accreditation process.

Specifically, the SAM Project assists centers and homes as they go through the accreditation process, either NAEYC, or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), by providing up to three days of on-site mentoring with experienced professionals, and assistance with half of the accreditation fee. A team of forty professionals, representing all

geographic areas of Illinois, helps programs with all aspects of accreditation, including understanding and complying with criteria, involving staff and parents in the process, assisting with proper documentation and completion of necessary paperwork, and identifying program improvements. The SAM Project offers an exciting opportunity to affect the quality of care and education for all children in Illinois.

Kathy Howard is the SAM Project Coordinator, 815-626-8872

The mission of Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children

(IllinoisAEYC) is to facilitate the optimal development of young children by advocating for the rights, needs, and well-being of young children and by educating, supporting and collaborating with individuals and organizations working in direct or indirect service to young children. Pat Steinhaus is the outgoing president.

Pat Steinhaus



Reaching for Quality Preschool

Comments from State and National Leaders



Governor Jeanne Shaheen

Governor Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire will become the Chair of the Education Commission of the States in July of 2000. Her special priority is early learning. "For too long, we have thought of child care and early education as an issue just for parents to resolve. But data show that early learning is an economic issue that will help determine the nation's prosperity now and in the future.

Nationally, employee absences related to child care problems cost U.S. businesses \$3 billion annually. And, in a global, knowledge-based economy, investments in quality early learning are critical if all students are to achieve at high levels. What are state leaders doing to help "connect" business and early childhood? Where are the success stories, and what are the appropriate roles for political, education and business leaders in promoting a strong start for all children? These are questions we will answer.



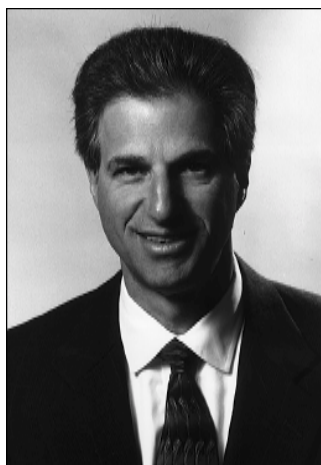
**Hazel Loucks, Deputy
Governor of Education**

"What happens to children from 0-3 has tremendous significance in regard to their developing into healthy teens and later healthy adults. It is imperative that we as state leaders take steps to ensure a healthy and wholesome 0-3 growth environment for every child in Illinois. It will take the concerted efforts of all state agencies as well as all the groups across the state that make children their focus."

Deputy Governor of Education Hazel Loucks is a member of the Early Learning Committee for the Education Commission of the States. She is a member of the Birth through Eight Early Learning Initiative in Illinois and has used her position to bring people together in dialogue and collaborative activities supporting early learning.

logo ecs

The Education Commission of the States(ECS) is launching a multi-year, nationwide early childhood initiative, led by the 2000-2001 chair of ECS, Governor Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire. This partnership will identify that state, education, business, and community leaders must take to leverage early learning for later success in school and life.



**Mark R. Ginsberg, Ph.D.,
Executive Director, National
Association for the Education
of Young Children (NAEYC)**

We know, from years of research and the experiences of parents and teachers, that, “the early years are learning years.” It is of critical importance that families and educators work together in communities to assure that young children have available a rich and nurturing early education.

Young children and their families need available high quality, affordable and accessible early care and education programs and services. Making certain that such programs are available to every family is best attained when citizens work collaboratively with community groups, municipalities, and families.”

www.naeyc.org

**Jess McDonald, Director,
Illinois Department of
Children and Family Services**

One of the toughest struggles faced by young children in foster care is lack of stability in their home lives. Trauma associated with abuse, neglect, and removal from their families often surfaces in behaviors that are difficult to manage for even the most experienced foster parents. Unfortunately,



*Pictured from left
to right: Mark R.
Ginsberg and Jess
McDonald.*

that sometimes means young children move from foster home to foster home, further depressing their chances for

academic success. Quality preschool programs can provide important family supports that help to alleviate this problem: structure and enrichment for the child, and developmental consultation and respite for the family. These are fundamental components of stability, and for children in foster care their presence can mean the difference between one placement and many.

Over the past several years, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services has been taking a careful look at the school performance of children in foster care. Thanks to research and programs from around the country, we have a much better sense of the kind of help our children need to be ready for school. Knowing the impact abuse and neglect can have on academic performance, we have gone to great lengths to build our own policy and programs with an eye towards promoting educational success. We know that our best chance is to start as early in children's lives as possible, and we have done a great deal of work toward that end.

Quality preschool services have a significant impact on school readiness. What may be less obvious is the important role preschool programs can play in helping us find and keep permanent homes for children in foster care. www.state.il.us/dcf

Creating Public Awareness of Early Childhood Needs Jerry Stermer

A statewide survey of 600 registered Illinois voters found that 78% recognized that birth to five years is the most important stage for developing a child's capacity to learn. However, only 32% made the connection that we should invest more in early childhood education to help more children get a good start.

A public ad campaign, just beginning, will remind people that starting early is the best way to help more children succeed, and to support our schools at the same time. The core message of the TV advertisements involves improving the quality of child care by providing more training opportunities for child care teachers. There are a number of valuable strategies for improving early childhood education, including raising child care teacher wages and providing more support to families with very young children. But *training* was the idea that really clicked with people. Parents and others expressed strong support for a comprehensive agenda of program reforms to help raise the quality of child care experiences.

This spring state legislators unanimously approved Great START which offers bonus incentives for child care teachers who achieve higher levels of education and keep working at the same early childhood education center or family child care home. Child advocates see Great START as an important first step to providing high quality child care around the state. Jerry Stermer is president of the Voices for Illinois Children.

www.voices4kids.org

Ten Criteria for Quality Preschool

Quality preschool programs are characterized by an enriching learning environment supportive of children and parents. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has established 10 criteria that identify a quality pre-

school. Examples of the criteria are presented in photographs from four preschool programs. An additional section called “Climbing the Mountain,” provides ideas for citizens, business, and P-16+ education to bring community action.

1. Interactions Among Teachers and Children

Interactions between children and adults provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of self and others and are characterized by warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support, and responsiveness.



“The foundation of quality preschool is knowledge of the children. We learn about the child and give them a nurturing relationship with adults outside the home.” Liz Hurtig, Chicago Public Schools. This Foster Grandparent and child at the East St. Louis Head Start Program are focused on the task of threading the spool. Foster Grandparent Programs are especially effective in helping young children experience positive support from adults.



One-on-one attention from the teacher is the hallmark of quality preschools. This teacher has time to spend with the preschooler to help him explore his interest in mountain climbing. He has the ropes over his shoulder and is learning about the compass.

Climbing the Mountain

Business: Honor and reward employees who volunteer to provide or improve early childhood programs and service.

P-16+ Education: Encourage and support students, faculty, and staff to perform volunteer service in early childhood health, education, and family support/parent education programs.

Citizens: Learn about preschools and share that information with friends and colleagues.

1. Interactions Among Teachers and Children

Teachers facilitate interactions among children to provide opportunities for development of self-esteem, social competence, and intellectual growth.

Children see the teacher treating all children with respect and consideration. Because cultural diversity is the norm in America, children must learn to function in diverse cultural contexts. Recognition of and respect for a child's unique cultural heritage is an essential first step in building positive identity.



Teachers facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control in children. Children learn that they are valued members of the class and the community. Children take responsibility by helping in the classroom. For example, the preschoolers take turns measuring. They place one bear next to other and then count the bears to determine height.



2. Curriculum

The curriculum engages children actively in the learning process, provides a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences.



A child brought a toy horse to class and the children started talking about horses. The teacher responded by arranging a visit to the stable. "Whenever the children find an interest, we follow that with the curriculum. The choices of topics for the curriculum comes from their play." Liz Hurtig, Chicago Public Schools.



When the children visited the stable, they used their clip boards to take notes on questions, such as What do horses eat? Do they sleep? The 3-year-old will scribble on the clip board. The 4-year-old will write shapes. The five-year-old will make letters and some words.

Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Help plan and assist teachers with curriculum development.

Business: Invite preschool to have a field trip and learning experience about your business.

P-16+ Education: Gather faculty and students across various disciplines and departments to share resources and research, and develop interdisciplinary programs and courses related to early childhood.

The curriculum encourages children to pursue their own interests in the context of life and the community and the world.



A child checks a picture for detail as he paints a picture of a horse jumping. His painting was later used as a reference for the construction of a jump made during the horse project.



Later, in the classroom, these two children created a planning board to be used as a reference for the construction of a horse. The group talks about the horses and the teacher writes their comments and posts in the classroom. "The children learn to understand their world through their play. They practice critical thinking, negotiation, making partnerships, and problem solving. The classroom is the text," Liz Hurtig, Chicago Public Schools

3. Relationships Between Teachers and Families

Teachers and families work closely in partnership to ensure high-quality care and education for children; parents feel supported and welcomed as observers and contributors to the program.

Teachers work in collaborative partnerships with families, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing, two-way communication with children's parents to build trust and mutual understanding.

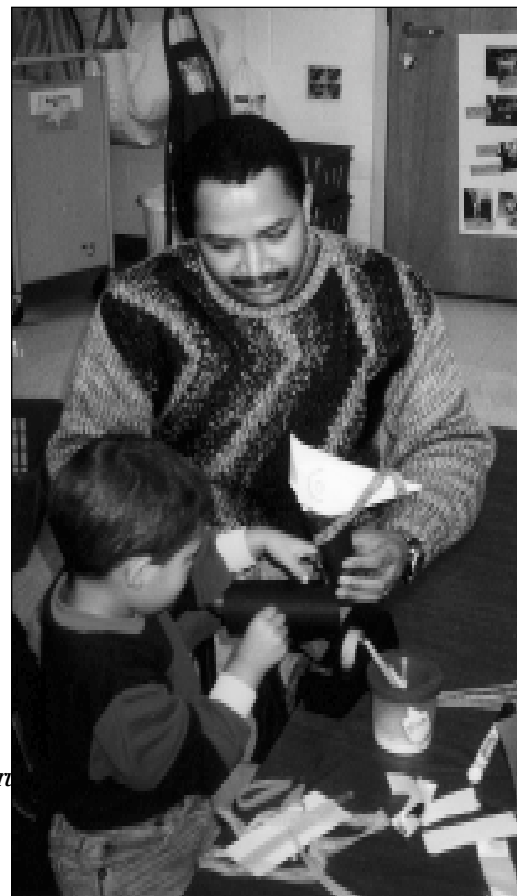
Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Help libraries develop and advertise their parenting section.

P-16+ Education: Establish campus parenting and child care programs for students and staff, and ensure that their facilities are safe and inviting.

Business: Work with media to publicize local programs that offer parent education and family support, early care and education and health services.

A father joins the class to help his son construct a horse after their field trip.

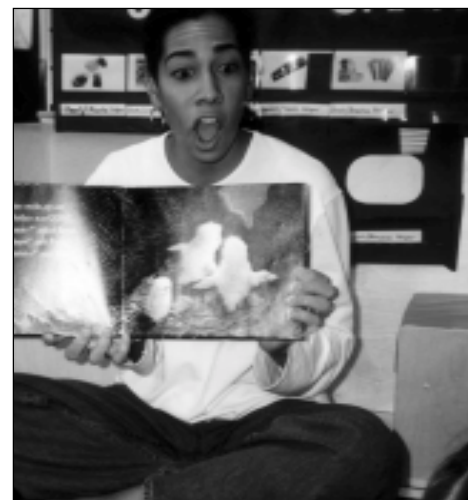


Quality preschools provide a continuum of parental involvement.

They orient the parents before the children begin, and offer workshops and training sessions throughout the experience. To transition the preschoolers to kindergarten, they invite teachers and parents of graduating preschoolers to meet the kindergarten teachers for the next year. It is a social event held at the Civic Center and offers a chance for parents to meet teachers before the year begins.



Rachel talks about her child who was unhappy about staying in the preschool.



Rachel stayed with the child and participated by reading to the children. Soon the child felt secure and comfortable in the new surroundings.

4. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

The program is staffed by adults who understand child and family development and who recognize and meet the development and learning needs of children and families. The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood program.



Early Childhood Teacher Assistants (Staff who implement program activities under direct supervision) are high school graduates or the equivalent and have received early childhood training. Early Childhood Teachers (staff who are responsible for the care and education of a group of children) have at least a CDA Credential or an associate degree in early childhood development or equivalent.

Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Serve on boards of organizations that provide early care and education.

P-16+ Education: Take an active part in efforts, local, regional, and national, to raise the qualifications of individuals providing services for young children and their families.

Business: Help process applications for staffing



Professional development is most effective if it follows a personal development plan prepared by each teacher in cooperation with peers. Workshops, conferences, college courses, and discussion among fellow staff is included in professional development.

5. Administration

The program is efficiently and effectively administered with attention to the needs and desires of children, families, and staff. Effective administration includes good communication among involved persons, positive community relations, fiscal stability, and attention to the needs and working conditions of staff members.



Staff orientation helps new and old staff learn about procedures and who is responsible for what. They use an animal theme with the director, posing as a lion (top photo), the associate directors as elephants (above), and other staff members as penguins and giraffes. It is a simple but effective way of showing staff who is responsible for what.

Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Volunteer time in the office

Business: Provide in-kind support, such as copying, faxing, mailing, or printing to local preschools

P-16+ Education: Establish ongoing service-learning partnerships to help with administrative tasks.

6. Staffing

The program is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of and promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.



Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Volunteer help with special events when greater staff-student ratios are desirable.

Business: Work with local media and the community to develop awards for staff.

P-16+: Establish curricula that encourage family-centered and collaborative practice among educators, health and family education and support professionals.

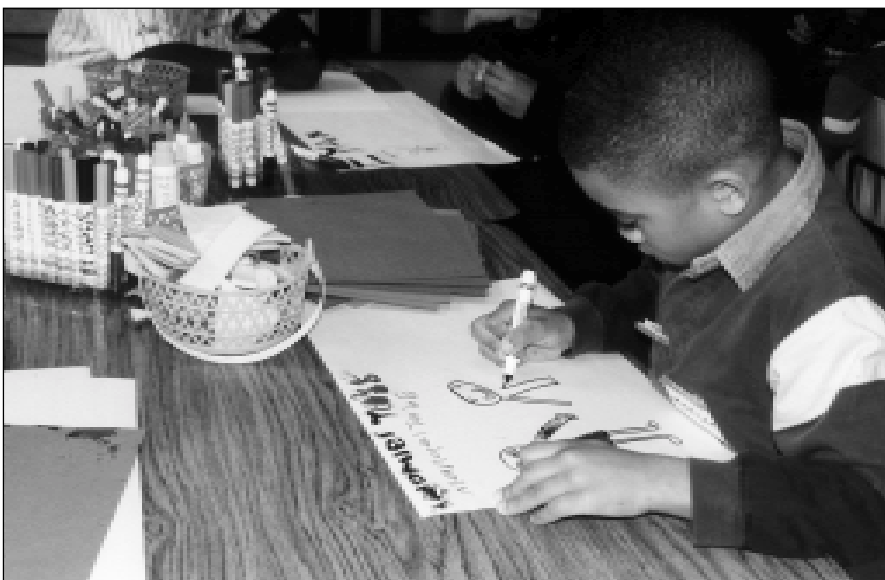
7. Physical Environment

The indoor and outdoor physical environment fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning.



(Left) A child hangs up an instrument in the music center. The labels that tell where each instrument goes were created by the children. The classrooms are organized into centers for different tasks: art, writing, reading, living, discovery, music, and building. Children can work individually, together in small groups, or in a large group.

(Right) The living center provides opportunities for dress-ups. "The building is a shell that changes all the time, one room is a jungle, another a space exhibit, another a shoe store. Teachers are creative at organizing space," Annie Hall, Rush Presbyterian Day School



A youngster finds some quiet time to work in the writing center

Climbing the Mountain

Business: Adopt a school playground or classroom.

P-16+ Education: Organize a service-learning program from architecture, engineering, or science to join the citizens in establishing a playground.

8. Health and Safety

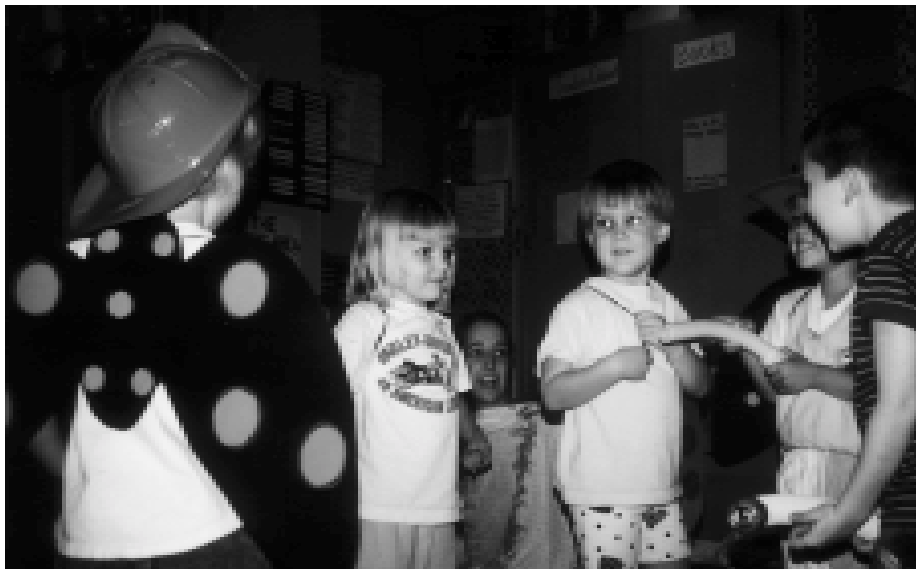
The health and safety of children and adults are protected and enhanced. The provision of a safe and healthy environment is essential. No amount of curriculum planning or positive adult-child interaction can compensate for an environment that is dangerous for children.

Good-quality early childhood programs act to prevent illness and accidents, are prepared to deal with emergencies should they occur, and also educate children concerning safe and healthy practices.

Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Plan and host forums on early childhood topics, such as safety and health

Business: Provide meeting space for discussion



The children act out the nursery rhyme, "Lady bug lady bug fly away home. Your house is on fire and your children will burn." Some children were lady bugs and others were firemen with hoses to put out the fire.



Then the fireman came to class and helped the teacher dress in the fire suit as the children learned about each item of fireman's clothing and its purpose.



Last, then the children visited the big fire truck and got to sit in the drivers seat. Safety for little children requires that staff and volunteers are screened, and many require finger printing, a background check, and references. It is not as easy to be a volunteer for preschool because of these procedures, but it is necessary to protect the children.



Meals are prepared by certified nutritionists to provide adequate nutrition. Responsibility is encouraged as the children learn to serve themselves and each other. In many schools food is used to emphasize the multicultural nature of the community. Children also learn about good nutrition practices.

9. Nutrition and Food Service

The nutrition needs of children and adults are met in a manner that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Work with libraries and media to emphasize good nutrition practices.

P-16+ Education: Nutrition majors plan a service-learning program to help youngsters learn good food habits.

10. Evaluation

Systematic assessment is conducted on the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals for children, families, and staff.



10: The Work Sampling System, which is a comprehensive approach to performance assessment, tracks the children's skills, behaviors, and accomplishments by focusing on actual examples of their performance in the classroom. The Work Sampling System consists of three elements: developmental guidelines and checklists; portfolios of children's work; and summary reports. "These elements give teachers the information they need to work most effectively with each child, Patricia Kellogg," Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Center

Climbing the Mountain

Citizens: Volunteer to help with the accreditation process.

Business: Share expertise to help with assessment; convene an internal task force to consider needs of employees.

P-16+ Education: Help preschools in the evaluation process; collect and share data about early care and education.

RESOURCE

Early Childhood Action Tips, Nina O'Donnell

Families and Work Institute, www.familiesandwork.org

Thank you to the following schools for providing photographs and information about the accreditation process.

State Prekindergarten Demonstration Center, Chicago

State Prekindergarten Demonstration Center, a Chicago Public School, opened in February 1989 with a dual mission—to provide a model preschool program for a culturally and linguistically diverse group of at-risk youngsters, and to provide professional development opportunities for new and experienced early childhood teachers. A developmentally appropriate curriculum allows children opportunities to act on and explore learning environments while enhancing cognitive and language skills. The school serves 68 3- and 4-year old children. The director is Elizabeth Hurtig.

Child Development Laboratories, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

The primary goal of the Child Developmental Laboratories is to provide quality education and training experiences for students majoring in Early Childhood, while enhancing the field of child development through research. Teachers assess each child's growth and development, and plan a curriculum to facilitate these processes. Children



Sara Starbucks

initiate their own experiences in the lab with the support and encouragement of a teacher and supporting staff. Special opportunities, such as creative movement and on/off campus excursions are regular features of the program. The director is Sara Starbucks.

Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center, Peoria

Valeska-Hinton is an early childhood education center for three- to six-year olds. The Center, a Peoria Public School, focuses on the four critical elements that help young children do well in school: a high-quality and developmentally appropriate curriculum; parents that are



Patricia Kellogg

involved in their children's learning; adequate health care and nutrition; and a well-trained and supported staff. Guided by the philosophy that "all children can learn," the innovative center operates year round and serves 400 at-risk children. The director is

Patricia Kellogg.

Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, Chicago

Laurance Armour Day School provides care and education for employees of the medical center. The school provides a blend of recreational and instructional activities and gives the care and support necessary to encourage a child to develop fully as a unique person. The school recognizes the importance



Annie Hall

of the development of a child's creative interest and offers a variety of arts, crafts, and science projects. Children also have the opportunity to develop motor skills through dance, creative movement and exercise. Foster grandparents from the Department on Aging give extra care and loving attention to the children. The director is Annie Hall

Fel-Pro: Business Establishing a Day Care Center

An example of how a business can help young children was developed in 1983 by Fel-Pro in Chicago. The Day Care Center offered full-time programs including a kindergarten program housed in its own building adjacent to the main plant. Fel-Pro covered 60% of the cost. The Center continued for more than 10 years offering a good model for business and preschool.

Elliot Lehman, CEO of Fel-Pro, describes the com-

pany philosophy. "We were aware that we had to listen to our employees to find out what they needed. Child care was becoming more and more important and less available. After consulting with experts in the field we established the Day Care Center. The investment was good for the company, for our employees and their families, and good for the community. Businesses trying to attract employees should consider a day care center."